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THE LIFE OF JESUS.

BY

DR. FERDINAND PIPER,
" "
PROFESSOR OF THEOLOGY IN BERLIN.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN

BY

WM. F. CLARKE.



ST. LOUIS:
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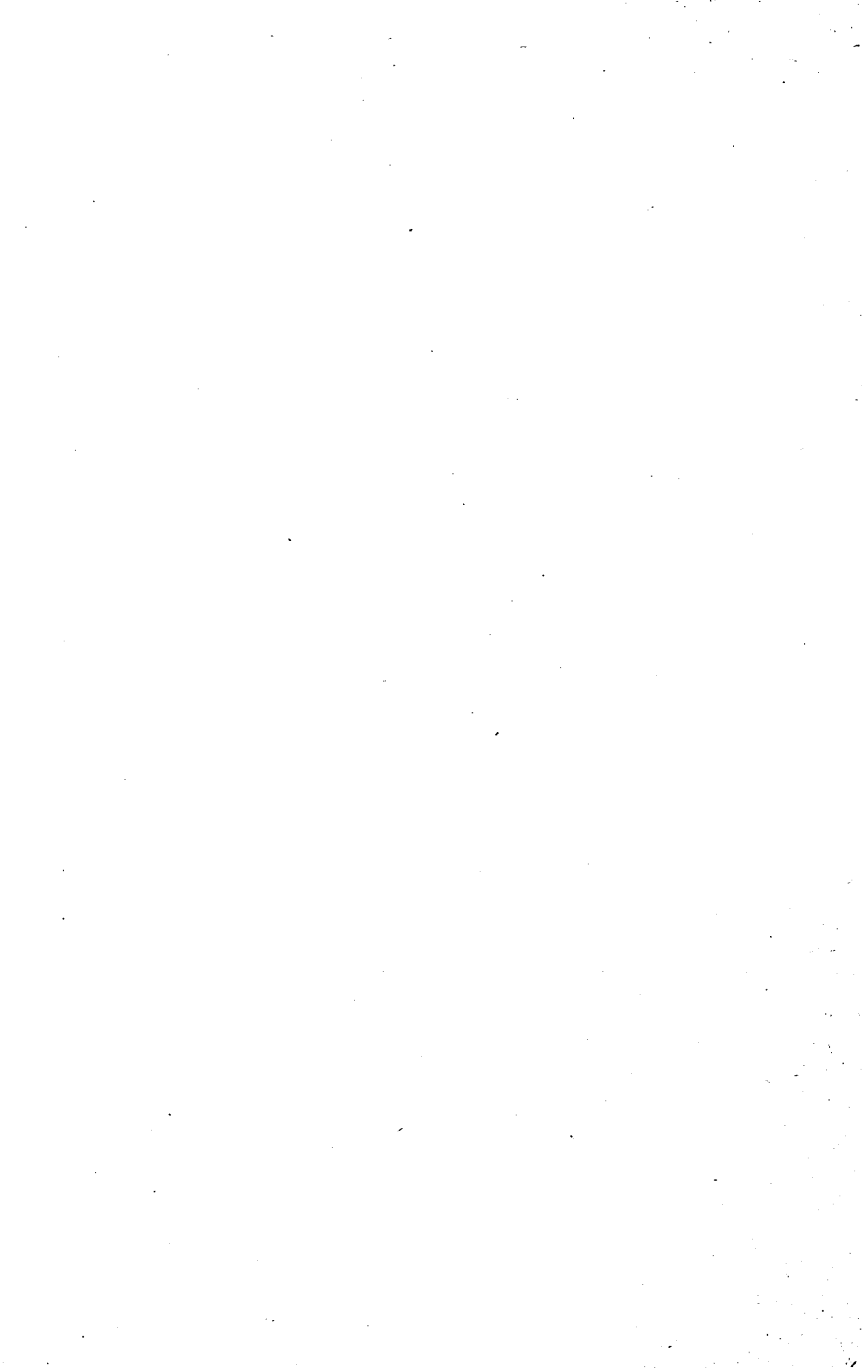
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To My Parents,
Who have ever Labored and Sacrificed
in my Behalf, this Little Volume
is Gratefully Dedicated.



PREFACE.

THE following pages are a translation of a part of a larger German work entitled "*Zeugen der Wahrheit*" ('*Witnesses of the Truth*') which is the product of many minds, but which was superintended in its preparation by Dr. Ferdinand Piper, a professor of theology in Berlin. The edition of which this is a translation in part was published at Leipzig in 1874. As the title means to imply, this larger work is a compilation of sacred biographies, or biographies of many persons who from the time of Adam on down have lived and borne witness to the truth. Among all these Jesus of Nazareth was pre-eminently *the* witness of the truth, nay, rather, was himself the truth. Wherefore in this compilation much more space is given over to a contemplation of the life of Jesus than to that of any other person. What is there said of him I have tried to translate, and have deemed it of such value and interest as to warrant its publication separate and apart from the remaining biographies.

The German work was the outgrowth of the annual publication in that country of a "*Church Calendar*," the main feature of which was that with every day of the year was coupled the name of some saint, and a brief account of his life. The calendar became quite popular, and it was improved and enlarged from year to year until, in the hands of Dr. Piper, it grew into a large work of four volumes, in which are to be found biographies of the leading spirits in biblical and ecclesiastical history carefully written by Germany's best and wisest theologians. Among its contributors are the names of many who are known the world over for their piety and scholarship.

Among the views expressed in this "*Life of Christ*" are some which will doubtless not meet with the approval of its readers. At least, such is the translator's experience; and it would have been a pleasure to him to have pointed out some of

these, as well as some which particularly please him. But he has thought best to let the various writers speak for themselves, and leave the way clear for them to carry their point with the reader, if they can. The deep piety, reverence, faith and spiritual insight displayed by these writers call for a careful consideration of their views on the part of the reader before he decides to reject what may at first seem to him objectionable.

In Germany religious festival days are more frequently observed, even by the Protestants, than in this country. Many of the events in the life of our Lord serve as a basis for these festivals, so that the day on which any such event occurred, or is supposed to have occurred, is kept as a religious holiday, and has its appropriate celebration. This fact explains the frequent allusion to festivals by the writers in this book.

It is with a deep sense of gratitude and pleasure that I acknowledge the assistance of friends in the preparation of this little volume. Especially am I indebted to Prof. H. C. Garvin of Butler College for numerous and valuable suggestions, and to Rev. J. W. Comfort, pastor of the Irvington Christian Church, who kindly read critically my translation, and by his suggestions added much to its style and finish.

That this book, besides contributing to the spiritual growth of its readers, and in other ways helping them, may, through the faith and piety which it displays, remove somewhat of the prejudice existing in this country against German theological writers, and so lead to a desire to know more about them and the splendid work they are doing in the direction of Bible study and practical Christian work, is the hope of

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IRVINGTON, IND., October, 1895.

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INTRODUCTION.

“THE LIFE OF JESUS!” Who tires of this wondrous story? Who knows it fully? Who hath fathomed the depths of its sorrow and pain or measured the expanse of its love and compassion? Who hath exhausted the meaning of its manifold miracles and mysteries, or calculated the vast sweep of its merciful ministrations and loving deeds?

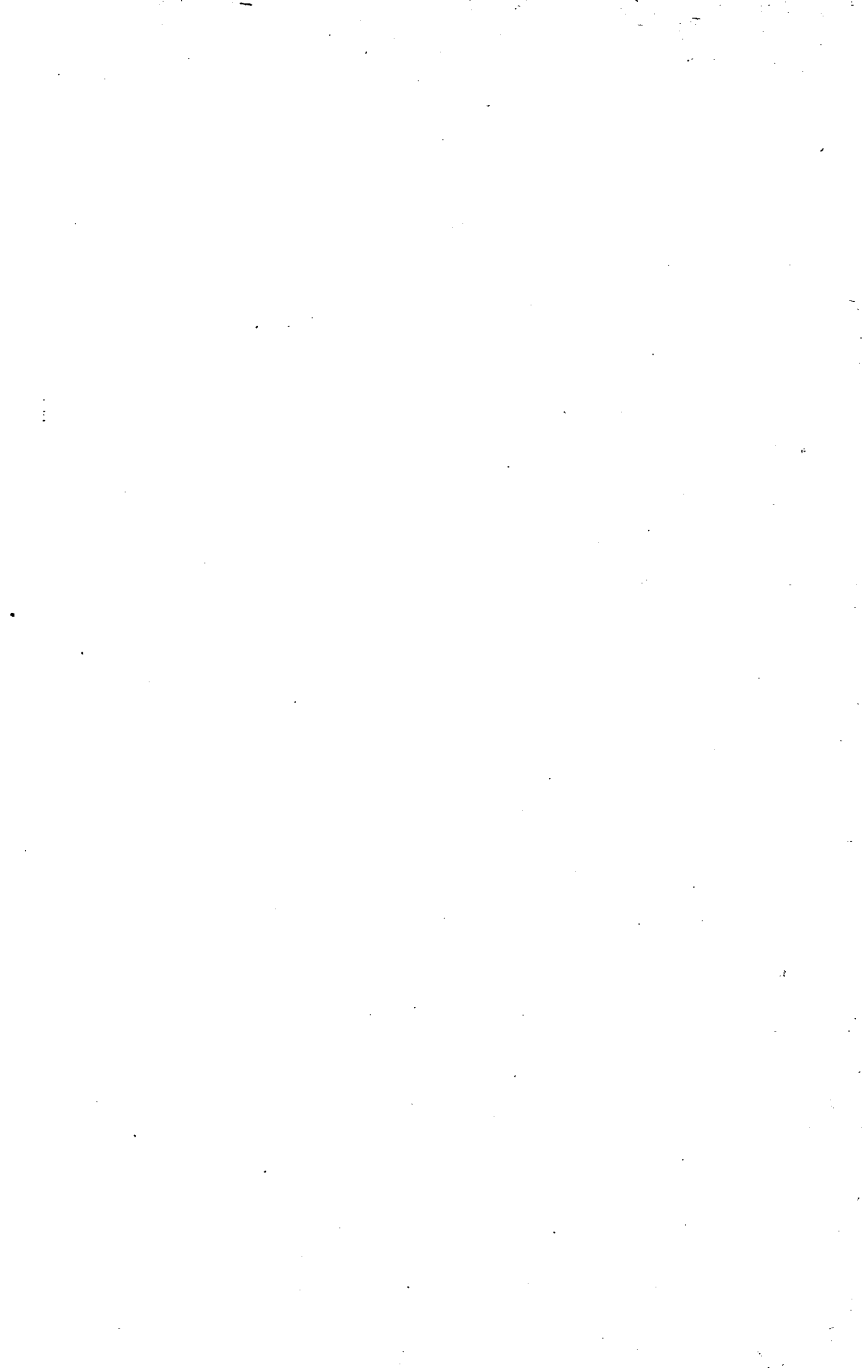
“The Life of Jesus!” Who can contemplate this lowly One of Nazareth as he goes about humbly doing good amid the scorn, the hatred, the cruel revilings, the malign opposition and the bitter persecutions of his enemies on the one hand, and amid the self-seeking, the ingratitude, the envy, the jealousy, the carnal ambition, the desertion and treachery of his followers on the other, without an overwhelming sense of pity for his grievous lot? Who can behold him standing before his fellow-countrymen at Nazareth grandly declaring his own majesty and worth and fearlessly revealing their narrow, jealous and inappreciative hearts; or entering the temple and with a scourge of his own devising driving out from its sacred presence those who by their carnal employments are defiling and profaning this holy sanctuary; or as he boldly addresses the proud and haughty Pharisees and in words most scathing and scornful lays bare their marvelous hypocrisies; or as, on many other occasions, he steps forth fearless, dignified and alone on the side of truth and right against the side of error and wrong—who can thus behold him without his heart swelling with admiration for his brave and noble character? Who can look upon him as he goes up and down in Judea and Galilee opening the eyes of the blind, unstopping the ears of the deaf, making whole the maimed, restoring to the limbs of the halt their wonted elasticity and functions, healing the sick of burn-

ing fevers and bloody issues, recalling even the dead to life; or consoling the broken-hearted, extending forgiveness to souls oppressed and borne down by the load of sin, and returning favors for revilings and blessings for cursings, without a grateful sense of his pity and his love? Who, further, can recall how he, the meek and lowly, was despised and rejected of men, shamelessly mocked and entreated, irreverently reviled, cruelly scourged, inhumanly crowned with a wreath of thorns, and maliciously nailed to the cruel cross, without an oppressive sense of the terrible, yea, hideous nature of sin? But who, finally, can behold him rising triumphant over death, revealing his glory to his assembled disciples and ascending from Olivet into the heavens, there to sit upon the right hand of God his Father and receive honor, glory and dominion, without resolving with Paul ‘to count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord . . . that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, becoming conformed unto his death; if by any means I may attain unto the resurrection from the dead?’

“The Life of Jesus!” We, too, may know its blessings. We, too, may feel the touch of his gentle hand as he bids us rise from the gloom and mire of sin and walk in the blessed light of his guiding Spirit. We, too, may have him remove from our eyes the blinding scales of bigotry, ignorance, selfishness and self-satisfaction, thereby enabling us to perceive the beauty of truth and holiness as revealed in his matchless life, and the repulsiveness of sin and unrighteousness as revealed in our degenerate hearts. Our ears, too, may be opened to catch the messages from the courts of heaven, messages which find expression in the joyous notes of happy birds or the pitiful moanings of naked, wind-swayed forests; in the exquisite music of babbling brooks or in the awful tones of thundering cataracts; in the refreshing rains of spring or the blighting drouths of summer; in the mild, soothing breezes from the southland or in the fierce blasts from out the north; in the fields groaning with their wealth of fruits and grain or in the deserts filled with naught but barren sand—in the blessings and cursings of God! We may hear his words of commendation, consolation and

cheer. We may feel the inspiration of his presence and have the help of his personal counsel. We may have him as our guest; for he seeks to enter into our inmost life that he may transform it and make it his own and like his own. Behold, he stands at the door and knocks. Will you not let him in?

How this life of Jesus lifts humanity up out of the gloom and despair of sin! But we are still far down in the accursed valley; about us still hover the mists of doubt and superstition. Far above us the mountain peaks are aglow with the Sun of Righteousness. Through the power of his life we have been enabled to catch a glimpse of this glory and splendor. We long to scale the heights that we may stand in the clear, full light of heaven's truth and glory. Sin alone makes hard the path. Come, Thou Mighty One, to whom all power is given, and guide and help us as we climb!



THE LIFE OF JESUS.

I.

The Annunciation to Mary.

March 25.

FOR a period of more than 1200 years the Christian Church celebrated the Festival of the Annunciation and, in anticipation of the Christmas festival, was wont at this season (March 25) to praise the wonderful glory of the Father as manifested in the incarnation of the Only Begotten Son. With this feast she invaded the period hitherto devoted to fastings and closed to all festal celebrations; she went so far even as to celebrate just before Easter-tide that which belonged properly to the season of Advent; and this she did only that she might accompany the miracle of the new redemptive creation in all its steps as outlined in the word of revelation. Although the better knowledge coming with the Reformation has rightly lessened this day's festal glamour and in many places completely covered it up, in that it has reduced the Feast of the Annunciation either to a holiday of less consequence than a Sunday, or to a plain working day, yet in so doing she has not meant that Christendom shall forget this holy, tender and sweetly-exalted moment of revelation. For in the Christian Church

it is not the Calendar of Festivals, nor the Stellar Cycle of the church year, which calls to mind the steps of revelation. She gives the confessing Christian the sacred Scriptures and instructs him to read, to observe and to follow the footsteps of healing grace as it advances in the midst of the revelation of the divine mysteries.

In harmony with the instruction given by these Scriptures, and with them as the source, the Evangelical Calendar asks its readers to gather in one great company before the quiet door of the chosen Virgin, the mother of the Lord, and there listen with reverence to the great yet gentle strides of grace whose song of praise resounds throughout the world's long history and throughout the heaven of heavens in the celestial tones of the countless hosts before the throne of God and the Lamb.

THE MISSION.

In the simplest language the evangelical history narrates an occurrence whose results extend far out beyond all the periods of earth into those of eternity. It is connected with another occurrence and put in line with it by the temporal limitation, "in the sixth month." It is the same angel Gabriel, the man of God, the strong one of the Almighty, who had in olden time (Dan. 8: 16, seq.; 9: 27, seq.) explained with pictures dimly drawn the mystery of the regeneration of the kingdom of God in Israel; and who but a while ago announced in the temple (Luke 1: 11-19) the forerunner of the Lord, whom you now see approaching the Virgin. Not for many years, not since the temple arose on Mount Moriah and the golden

cherubim covered there the ark of the covenant; not since both these pledges of God's presence were fixed firm and magnificent in the golden temple halls, in the priesthood, and in the splendid religious services; not since the royal city was placed before the eyes of men, had the resplendent faces of heavenly messengers been seen on earth.

When only ruins and rubbish marked the place of all this splendor, then these faces shined once more with majesty into the night of captive Israel and became new pledges and securities of the hope which was ever sprouting anew from the ancient roots of promise. And the temple arose again, though with an empty Holy of Holies. Its marble mass and its golden roof said to the hoping Israelite that some time yet the Lord would come and the angel of the covenant for whom they longed. And in all this long hour of twilight of more than half a thousand years no one heard the rustle of angels' wings such as once had fanned the fathers and prophets with air from the eternal world.

Now, however, the gates of heaven swing outward; and Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, is sent forth from God—and the birth-hour of a new revelation in the history of humanity is at hand. God speaks to men things new, such and in such manner as no ear of earth e'er heard before. There were pristine tones wafted down from the gates of paradise, from Abraham's solitary wanderings, from the harp of David, from the watch-tower of Isaiah, from the consoling cry of Micah, from the mournful visions of Ezekial and Daniel, from the marvelous pictures of Zechariah and from the hope of the temple's restora-

tion as cherished by Malachi—and yet these were so unheard of, so heavenly new and clear, that their prophecy was clearly one which would have fulfillment. Now He, the solace of Israel, came; for his paths were all made ready, his forerunners had all appeared; Gabriel was sent “unto a city of Galilee named Nazareth.” It was Galilee of the Gentiles which saw the great light by the way of the sea, where the beginning was made. It was the “blossoming” city in which “the shoot came forth;” it bore the name (Nazareth) which the Promised One himself had received at the hands of prophecy (Nezer Zemach). Therefore He was called “a Nazarene.”

He was sent “to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David.” The image of the chosen Virgin had long gleamed into the eyes of the faithful from out Isaiah’s darksome word. But surely she would not come while a foreigner was in the king’s palace, and least of all, from the distant hill country of the Gentiles! The heathen Idumean, Herod, ruled on Zion’s throne. His dark jealousy sought to blot out, even from the genealogical register, all memory of the house of David. On this account its latest and almost unknown descendants were sojourning far away from their city Bethlehem and from Jerusalem within the boundaries of another and less suspicious ruler. Matthew has told us (1: 18, seq.) in a simple way of the betrothal of the chosen of God to Joseph the carpenter. Whether he had heretofore been her guardian and continued to be only that, since they both were of the Davidic family, as Luke (3: 23) testifies of the Virgin, we do not know.

And the virgin was called "Mary," a primitive and sacred name for a prophetess; the sister of Moses and Aaron bore it. Its pleasing tone whether it be of humble or of sublime significance (it means either "their stubbornness" or "their rebellion," and signifies either the sin of Israel, or the victory over the enemies of God) is repeated in many languages with as many variations; and has, because of false interpretation, called up in souls many varied fantasms. This interpretation conjured up before the fanciful mind at one time the rolling waves of the sea itself, from which life, in the beginning, arose, and at another the ocean's resplendent brow. These are but shadow-pictures which vanish before the pure illustrious form of the "Hand-maid of the Lord," the consecrated Virgin possessed of the mind of heaven.

THE GREETING.

"And the angel came in unto her and said"—here the full revelation from the eternal heights. The "Man of God" appears in plain, visible form, the seal of the heavenly mission beaming from his countenance, and speaks in human language words which never again can vanish from feeling and memory, words which will be preserved in the purest tradition of the world, and which will be repeated again and again till time has ceased to be. The consecrated solitude of the Virgin, the prayerful peace of the soul resting upon hope in God, the secluded chamber in which only tones of supplication and thanksgiving had been heard, the place where many a holy and blessed presentiment may have stirred the soul long since made ready by the Spirit of God—this has become a temple

in which the voice of God is heard. "Hail, thou highly favored, the Lord is with thee!" "Ave!" Thus is this greeting re-echoed in the Latin tongue in the halls of the Christian Church, "Ave Maria!"

Here all the grace and mercy of the eternal God, voiced by angel mouth, addresses one solitary and diffident virgin-heart. She had ere this, indeed, trembled before the holy God. For she, sprung from a sinful race, bows to the dust before His judicial majesty. And she is the chosen one precisely because she is the most eager of all those longing souls who, oppressed by the law's severity, have, because of the promises and prophecies, a hope and a confident expectation of a redemption from sin. Now, however, the Creator greets His creature, and a new world which no prophecy could reveal opens up to her pious soul, a soul purified as respects Old Testament purity. That was advance information as to the new covenant! It was God's gracious greeting to earthly woman! It was the removal of the curse resting upon her because of sin; the complete establishment of the blessing which accompanied even the curse. Though it be but a play upon words, it is nevertheless an ingenious play that Ave is only Eva reversed. A heavenly wave of life ripples in the quiet, gentle soul of the Virgin. All her holiest presentiments are fulfilled, her happiest hopes overwhelmed with a tidal wave of blessing. "Hail, thou!"

But what titles the angel applies to her! "Highly favored—Blessed!" For the first time the stream bursts forth. Grace is not *promised* her, it is declared that she already has it in her full possession. How she had looked up to the chosen, the divinely-

avored women, the mothers of the human race, the strong heroines of hopeful faith, the wife of Noah, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and those encircled by the light of prophecy, the mothers of kings and prophets! With what unconscious humility she had felt herself far, far beneath these! And now comes from angel mouth: "Thou Highly Favored One!" She understood well and fully that more was meant by that than had ever been promised to them. All their silver brooks of blessing unite in her in one rich stream. And as the Blest One she is also surrounded by the charm of holiness and the glory of consecrated beauty, is the "Highly Favored," who now, exalted to the earthly ideal of womanly charm, humble and blest of God, has received all those gifts which transfigure even the physical appearance by the sunbeams of their spiritual glory. It is innocence and chastity, reproduced through grace, which here beam out upon the world as the first fruits of redemption.

"The Lord is with thee!" Thus the angel greeting advances. This was the seal of what she believed. How oft may her soul have stood in silent contemplation and prayer before Isaiah's prophecy regarding the Virgin's Son, and, after its continuing in a great and beautiful harmony, tempered throughout by want and anxiety, after the sweet closing strain: "Immanuel, God with us!" have departed in blissful hope! Here was the answer to the cry of hope running throughout the Old Testament: Immanuel! At the first He was this for one alone—the chosen one, for "The Lord is with thee!"

She was thereby marked out with the sign of divine

selection, just as were the holy men of God and the noble women in the time of hope.

But they all had a work to do, a testimony to give, a battle to wage; with this call was opened up a way of suffering. The greeting opened up a door. Whither? Whither? came the question from the anxious heart of the diffident Virgin, a heart surprised by this flood of grace. "And when she saw him she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be."

The question did not venture to pass her lips; only the turbid heart speaks to the angel spirit, a spirit able to look into and read the souls of men. Blessed fear of humility! Noble amazement of innocent submission!

THE MESSAGE.

"Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found favor with God." By this the Virgin sees her most inner self unveiled. None of the timid, anxious, indistinct emotions has escaped the heavenly eye. But see! he does not speak reproachfully of a weak faith in the divine mission, he makes no accusation of sinful fear and earthly tremor before the tasks which the God of life imposes; a sweet, consoling tone comes from his lips. With greater fullness and minuteness he sets forth to her that which he had already suggested in his salutation. Here may human fear subside and blest appropriation and possession dispel all sense of poverty and awe. God's messenger names the earthly name, Mary! and thereby hallows it. It is as if she had just received it fresh from heaven. It is henceforth a proclaimer of divine compassion. It is a christen-

ing. Whenever the name of one of earth's beings is repeated from the gates of heaven, such a name is written down in heaven. But this is only introductory to the message. "Thou hast found grace with God," it continues. Only where there had been seeking could there be joyous finding. The past life of the Virgin had been one of longing, hoping and faithful seeking. The royal promises, the inheritance of the house of David, must already have aroused the Virgin to seeking, to reaching out into the future. These promises found an echo in her inner being. For, beings chosen for great undertakings have a presentiment of their destiny.

The very opposite of all of this, her flight into a strange country situated on the most distant border of the promised land, and her poverty, which made her the betrothed of a carpenter and the royal offspring an artisan, coupled with the glimmer of royalty descending from her ancestors, had kept alive in her the seeking after the highest good, the grace of God. And what she sought, that she found; thereby her former life is closed; she had brought the old covenant to completion. The grace of God, the eternal grace which ruled over His likeness, man, and over Israel in all the centuries, has been granted to her, a single woman, an obscure Virgin. Henceforth she feels the eye of the eternal God resting upon her; she receives light and life from this ray of grace; and that which came into other souls only at the institution and limitation of the first church on the day of Pentecost, after the cross, grave and ascension, this, in delightful exception, was given to her at once, viz.: the peace of God through grace!

Now the clouds of fear are scattered before the sunlight of heavenly love; the Old Testament awe of the approaching Jehovah is changed into New Testament love and praise; the Virgin is lifted above shy hesitancy and her soul made ready for the angel's message.

"And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS." With David's daughter, with Mary, who lived only in the hope of the promises, there was no further need that the angel should refer her to the prophet and his prophecy concerning the Virgin's Son. She understood what honor was conferred upon her, an honor before which that grows dim which was accorded Sarah in being the mother of the promised son, yea, even that which was granted Eve as mother of the race. Mother of the Messiah! That was overwhelming. For her soul the name of Jesus had been voiced in all the types and prophecies from Joshua on, and now that name is brought down to her from the mouth of God, from Heaven.

The paintings which represent Mary as swooning at the reception of this message might well be true if there had not been present within her soul the living power of grace and the joy of fulfillment given her by the words of the salutation. But now she does not faint; on the contrary she hears every syllable clear and distinct. She knew that she was chosen and exalted to a height of which she had never dreamed, although as the offspring of David she would have had a right to have done so. But before she can recover herself from the contemplation of this divine

fullness of grace of éléction, the peal of the message from heaven rings on:

“He shall be great and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.”

Here in a few words was all that had been promised from the very beginning. The true man, born of her the human mother; the Son of David sprung from her the daughter of David; and yet forever King, Ruler everlasting, God from heaven, Jehovah, before whom from a child she had bowed in prayer to the dust! All of this she had heard, had read it indeed in the prophets, had wondered at it, had drunk into it, had rejoiced at it. But now to know all this greatness, all this glory suddenly, and in so restricted, unique and exclusive a manner referred to herself, to her own life, her own body, her whole being, that, indeed, was something for which women of old had hoped in vain. Was it not a dream? Dare she share such glory? But God had spoken; as she lifted her eyes again there still stood the resplendent form of the angel, and every doubt was made impossible.

THE MIRACLE.

“Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?” No longer does she doubt her being the chosen mother of the Savior; she only wonders that she, a Virgin, should be chosen; her words are but the expression of a human soul reverent before the incomprehensible. From Eve on the birth of man had been accomplished through two

parents. For the first time man springs from woman like as in the beginning woman sprang from man. Whether ingenious art, when it pictures a lily blooming at this moment in the Virgin's chamber, as is true of most all paintings of the annunciation, means thus to recall the creatorial ruling of God which can create at any moment out of nothing; or whether it puts the flower of purity there merely as an emblem of the Christ-mother, in either case it is a manifest illustration of the angel's word, "With God nothing shall be impossible."

Here we meet with a mystery which even angel tongue cannot reveal in the language of man, but can only cover with a semi-transparent veil.

"The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee." What language! That the Spirit of God ruled creatively from the beginning when it brooded over the waters; that thenceforth for all spiritual corporeal productions according with the divine original it was the most intimate impulse, the guide, center and consecrator of all natural human powers; that it moved souls most intimately and inwardly to holy feelings, heavenly knowledge, divine deeds; that therefore precisely for that reason it was the fullness of the light, the power of the word, the strength of the deeds and wonders done in the apostolic church,—this all is evident to every one familiar with the course of revelation. The Holy Spirit accordingly brings to bear upon the spiritual as well as the material world a personal, divinely-operative influence. Especially, however, is it the Holy Spirit which mediates all the influence brought to bear upon him who was made in

the image of God, viz: man, who through the inbreathing of the living breath (spirit) of God into the earthy form became a living soul. Since the fall of the human race, however, all the operations of God in the world have had reference to redemption; and all physical powers as well as spiritual activities which connect therewith are sustained, guided, brought together and ruled over by Him.

In the incarnation of God, in the birth of the God-man, a center was given to all these activities, a common meeting-ground. Here, accordingly, the influence of the Holy Spirit is acting upon the chosen one, upon her body, soul and spirit; and they have long been prepared therefor by parentage, life and divine inner experience, and now thoroughly so by the mission, salutation and message of the angel. It is a holy influence exerted over the realm of her spirit and soul-life, and in its direction, a life indeed exalted even unto poetic and prophetic heights (Luke 1: 48 seq.); and a holy creatorial influence over her corporeal life. The "coming upon the Virgin" is the heavenly glorious power of eternal life as it here enters the temporal; and this was a most joyous experience, it was the inner fullness of communion with God, the exultation of holy joy, the possession and experience of that which formerly had only been hoped for and believed in as approaching. So, then, God was present and the incarnation of God accomplished through the self-renunciation of His Only Begotten Son.

"The power of the Highest shall overshadow thee." Is this anything other than the coming of the Holy Spirit? Yes, indeed! The Holy Spirit is a God-life

which has its life in the soul and is spiritually discerned there. But the power of the Highest, this creative, ever wonder-working omnipotence whose art and manner is to reach out even beyond all human survey of its activity and be seen only through its operations, this power which creates invisibly, which calls those things which are not as though they were, man cannot perceive. And yet they are one and the same. For the creative activity of the Holy Spirit within the world which, though corporeal, is still nevertheless referable to the spirit world, coincides in an indistinguishable manner with the power of the Highest.

A new beginning is thus given to the life of humanity, the second Adam is a descendant of the first Adam, and yet is as immediately from God as the first. The Savior is Son of Man according to the flesh, but is demonstrated with power to be the Son of God according to the spirit. "Therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." The angel declares with reverent spirit the divinity of the Eternal Son even in his incarnation and in his humanity. Mary was to bear God in his humanity; and subsequently the church in a heated struggle against well-meant but one-sided anxiety, obtained for her the sacred title "Mother of God;" an appellation which at that time even in the church itself, was greatly misunderstood. This, however, rests firm upon the angel's words, viz: that to Him born of the woman, to our Lord Jesus Christ, belongs in its fullest measure and sense the appellation, "Son of God;" "therefore" because he derived his earthly

being from the Holy Spirit and the power of the Highest.

This annunciation forms the text of all the songs of sorrow sung by the church at the cross and tomb of Jesus; and of all its songs of gladness shouted forth on ascension day, and on all its days.

And the child, before his birth even, was called "The Holy." In this is a proclamation beforehand of the sinlessness of our Lord in his earth life. That which apostolic enlightenment afterward preached: "He was tempted in all points like as we, yet without sin," what even Satan himself had to discover in the wilderness, this appears here forthwith as the expressed will of God.

Henceforth all the soul-emotions of the chosen Virgin and mother, all her spiritual activities, even her corporeal life, clustered about this holiness and were themselves made holy; so that she could not impart to Him of the sinfulness inborn even in her, but much rather she from his holy life received powers which lifted and sustained her in sacred peace and divine strength above all the debasing powers of this sin-stained earth.

THE OBEDIENCE.

"And Mary said, 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord: be it unto me according to thy word,' and the angel departed from her." Before this wonder of wonders every question, every doubt grows dumb. Here is God's power and grace, and before it bows the enraptured heart. In the midst of such fullness even its own poverty departs. The tender humility, the quiet, gentle spirit comes into full view as the

first effect of the Holy Spirit: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord." It is only that she once more recognizes with bliss and joy the opportunity of serving the will of God. This humility in her is dignity and majesty, a new regal grandeur for the heiress of David; and as at the time of her being favored she was a charming Virgin, so is she now a devoted mother in a most noble union of dignity and obedience; and she remains, therefore, the model of pure motherhood for every time and for all the world wherever there is faith in the Only-Begotten Son whom she bore for the world.

And even after the glow of heaven left this quiet chamber, and the splendor departed which had transformed it from an earthly dwelling to a gate of heaven; even after the heavenly tones grew silent which had brought the greeting and a message from the heart of God, the miracle still remained; and her angel thenceforth was the child given her through God's grace, and given through her for the redemption of the world of sin. And she followed the steps of the Son and beheld with her eyes his glory as of the Only Begotten Son of the Father full of grace and truth; and a sword pierced through her soul; but with faith in the Son of God she awaited the redemption of her body and experienced the glorious power of God in its consummation. She still stands in our times as the resplendent image of womanly graciousness, as the Virgin and mother, as the chosen one, as a royally humble soul, as the first diamond in the crown of Him who was even her Savior. And every Christian heart loves and honors her, although it keeps no feast day, yields her no devotion, feels no need of

her intercession and lordship in heaven, and does not believe that her good pleasure is subserved when it surrounds her with the gay colors of human fiction, or indeed when again it attributes to her birth the miracle she herself experienced. Free from the colored reflections and veneers of the impure heart of man, open, clear and biblically true and sharp, her lovely image stands there for the Christian as a living sign of what God's grace, through preparation and selection, can make out of His creatures even down here on earth.

W. HOFFMAN, *Berlin*.

II.

Mary's Visit to Elizabeth.

July 2.

IN THE Annunciation to Mary the golden gates of divine mercy swing outward, and heaven greets poor earth. The day of Mary's purification in connection with the presentation of Jesus in the temple, and of his joyous reception by Simeon and Hanna, was a day of deep thanksgiving for all mothers; a day which annually reminded them as to whom they were to present their children. This day affected deeply womanhood's tenderest life, and deeply, too, the relation of parents to children. But more striking, still, if possible, is the visit of Mary to Elizabeth. The angel had made known to Mary that her friend and relative Elizabeth, the wife of the priest Zachariah, had conceived a son, and that it was now the sixth month with her. The one angel of annunciation, the one message, the one brief word, even, join children and mothers in a common bond. In heaven John's relation to Jesus was like that of the roseate dawn to the glorious sun as it breaks forth upon morning's dew. But they must also meet on earth; and this they do, even while yet in their mother's womb. "Mary arose in those days

(30)

and went with haste into the hill country, into a city of Judah" (or better, "into the city Jutha"). Elizabeth does not go to Mary. The Law does not seek the Gospel, but the Gospel seeks the Law, in order that it may pour the balm of God into broken and contrite hearts. Mary felt impelled towards Jutha. She must go and be with her friend and exchange experiences with her, for she, as was easily surmised from the angel's message, would best understand her joy. She must be where she may impart as well as receive. The Virgin hesitates not before the wild and rough hill country over which she has to pass, nor because of the storms and chill that may surround her, nor at thought of the wild beasts and robbers which may beset her path. God's favor rests within her loins and his grace fills her heart, therefore all fear is far removed. The mountains sink to plains, and the wild beasts become creatures of gentleness; chasms and the mountain streams supply their own bridges, and evening its resting place. The angel had written her passport, he must also care for her as she journeys along the highways or through the by-paths. On the passport there stood written, "Touch not mine anointed." "She went in haste," for the spirit of joy impelled her. How could she rest, she whose purpose was to bring her friend the kingdom of heaven? She arrives; she enters. The Old Covenant and the New, the Law and the Gospel, hope and fruition, meet in this hill country, in the quiet

home of a priest; it is the King of Heaven visiting his first subject. Elizabeth knows her visitor. She had long known Mary as a cousin; and now, through the Holy Spirit, she recognizes her as the mother of her Lord, as the mother of him whom the son now in her loins should precede in the spirit and power of Elijah. That was her day of grace; salvation had come to her house, for the Day-spring from on high was her guest. But the mother is not alone in her rejoicing. Just as Abraham, born and dead long years ago, rejoiced to see the day of his Lord, so here, one yet unborn rejoices. In him, too, all posterity was rejoicing. As Elizabeth listened to the salutation of Mary, the babe in her womb leaped with gladness; it shared already its mother's joy.

And now the two hymns of praise begin. Elizabeth sings of Mary alone. Her song begins: "Blessed art thou among women." But Mary centers her praise on the throne of God. She sings: "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my heart rejoiceth in God my Savior." The palm-tree is bearing aloft with itself into heaven the ivy encircling it with its beauteous green. Now see, dear reader, how the grace of God, in quiet growing and progressing, points onward unto the Lord. Here one single friend, one single relative, has been made to know that the Eternal Son of the Father is in her little chamber, is within the loins of Mary. On the day of his birth, and again on

that of his presentation in the temple, only a few were made aware of his advent. On the day when, at twelve years of age, he stood in the temple and testified of the Father, the eyes of at least an hundred rested upon him. The seed-grains of his reception when he should come forth were gradually being scattered farther and farther abroad. That is God's silent method of working. But hold! let us abide yet awhile at the home of Zachariah. Mary and Elizabeth are the first of those who are friends in the Lord. High above the old ties of relationship have those of this new friendship now ascended. Mary and Elizabeth form the first little church of believers. They had assembled in the name of the Lord, and he was there in their midst. These three were joyous months for them. Their eyes looked back upon the promise given their fathers; their hearts rested calmly in the gracious annunciation, and their spirits laid hold of the great future with pure and gentle hands. That joy can fill thy house, too; thy Lord would also visit thee. Only let him in! Cease longer doubt. Of Zacharias our text says nought, for he, too, like the text, was dumb and silent, a punishment imposed upon him because of unbelief. He joined not with the women in their songs of praise—his praise came later on. This mars and detracts from the beautiful season. After a stay of three months, and

so just prior to the birth of John, Mary returned to her home in Nazareth. Her visit was one which Elizabeth never forgot. *

FR. AHLFELD, *Leipsic*.

* "Mary's Visit" was introduced into the Oriental Calendar of Feasts, and assigned to July 2 by Pope Urban VI. in 1389. The union of the Greek and Roman churches was a matter very dear to the heart of this Pope. It was probably meant that Mary's affectionate, friendly meeting with Elizabeth should be typical and suggestive of the union of these churches, the goal towards which he was striving. His wish has remained unfulfilled.

It is difficult to say why he chose July the 2d as the date for this feast. According to the historic order of the ecclesiastical year it must fall on a day coming soon after March 25th, and in any case on one coming prior to that assigned to John. March 25th is put down as "Annunciation Day," and we find following close upon the account of the Annunciation the statement that "Mary arose in those days, and went with haste into the hill country, into a city of Judah" (Luke 1: 39). The following thought appears to me to have determined the date: The 24th of June is John's birthday, and July the 2d the day of his circumcision. Upon this latter day he was given the name John ("God is gracious"), and upon this day, also, and at this christening, Zachariah's tongue was loosed, and he gave expression to a firm belief in the words which the angel had spoken at the time of the Annunciation to Elizabeth. He points out and seals his son as the one who, in the spirit and power of Elijah, was to precede God's grace as manifested in the person of our Lord. And now it has been arranged that they two shall meet at once. Are not therefore the day of Mary's Visit and the day of John's circumcision probably one and the same?

When the Protestant Church examined the Calendar of Feasts in the light of the Bible, the Lutheran branch saw fit to reject only those feasts known by the names, "Mary's Birthday," "Mary's Sacrifice" and "Mary's Ascension." They wisely let remain those entitled, "Mary's Annunciation," "Mary's Purification" and "Mary's Visit." In most Lutheran lands these latter feasts withstood the storm of criticism, and continued to be observed up until the last, or even the present century. In most other regions they were wholly abolished; in some the feast of "Mary's Annunciation" alone continues to be celebrated, and in yet a few others all three are still celebrated. We cannot but regard their abolition as a deep injury to the church.

III.

Christmas.

December 25.

"*Christmas!*" Who fathoms the depths of this word? Who measures the height, the depth and the breadth of the history which it calls into the circle of our view? In the moment which this word designates, a period of four thousand years, filled with holy desire and expectancy, finds its close, and an eternity of life, peace and joy begins!

"*Christmas!*" The simple and expectant child rejoices at the sound of this word; the wise and thoughtful man droops reflectively his head and sinks into reverent awe. Yes, here is the crystal brook in which the tender lamb may wade, and yet, again, the fathomless sea in which the mightiest beast can and needs must swim.

Humanity, left to itself for a time, had exhausted its powers in thinking, inventing and striving, as it reached out after the idea in its existence and sought to attain its goal. Yet in the realm of morals it had never gained a true view of holiness; in the realm of art it had never freed itself from the powers of earth; and in the realm of intellect it had, at best, in its few most eminent

spirits, arrived at a vague presentiment of the personal God. The wisdom of the heathen world, even that of its most enlightened masters, stood like a bewildered orphan knocking at the doors of eternity. Art, with outstretched pinions, lifted herself aloft that she might look beyond the realm of earthly beauty, and there discover that ideal world whose rays broke dimly through into this ; but she ended in an idolatrous worship of sensuous beauty itself. The religion of heathendom, in its purest manifestations, was, it is true, also—though but half consciously so—an attempt to restore the communion with God which had been sundered through sin. But it was clearly a mistaken attempt. Along with truth and holiness, peace, that child of heaven, had forsaken the earth ; and along with peace, love for God and the desire to do his good pleasure. Instead of hope, fear was everywhere dominant. But this unconquerable terror in the hearts of the nations which caused them to tremble before the unknown power enthroned above them, and the darksome future lying far beyond them, became, in the hands of the saving God, a means of training by which he restrained the outbursts of their corrupted wills, and prepared their souls for the reception of that salvation which he in his grace not only even now had prepared for them, but was bringing near them.

The time was “fulfilled.” The expectancy of Israel’s faithful ones had already reached the high-

est pitch. The mysterious radiance streaming from the brow of a Simeon, and others, proclaimed, like Alpine glow, the dawning day. The heathen nations, especially Greece and Rome, were swaying between the fullest doubt and a most frivolous epicureanism. The resigned query of Pilate, "What is truth?" already echoed from millions of lips. Other and deeper spirits, in their bewilderment, had thrown themselves into the arms of Judaism; but it was only to become inwardly conscious that here, too, beneath the yoke of the law, no peace was granted them. Moreover, the prophetic predictions had reached their chronological end, and the honor of God and his word demanded their final fulfillment. Then was struck the great salvation hour, the hour of the regeneration of a race perishing in sin and lust, the hour of the world's redemption and renewal! Salvation appeared. It was not an idea. Humanity needed something more than enlightenment. Nor was it a law. Law killeth, but it cannot make alive. Nor was it a guide-post bearing aloft some such inscription as "This is the Way!" Of what use is such to one lame, or to one fettered on hand and foot? The want and necessity of a world fallen a prey to the curse was a personality, a man who himself should be the way and the life, and be made "for us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption!" And lo! Christmas brought him! Before the crib in Bethlehem

and amid the strains of the angel song, bow, O earth, in joy thy knee! This lowly crib, thou blest one, holds within its embrace thy Prince of Peace, thy Savior!

Those heavenly beings who chant him his cradle song know who he is. They too who are familiar with revelation know him; those who, like Simeon, Hanna and the shepherds, after that they have seen him, give forth their cry of "Land!" and joyously furl their aspiring sails. He was before he came. "In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God." Already without the aid of revelation, and by a course of its own, the reflective spirit of man, proceeding from faith in a personal God and following the path of necessary deductions, had arrived at the thought that the eternal source of all-being, who is love itself, could not, before he began to create, have been alone, or egoistically wrapped in himself. But he must from eternity on have found the object of his divine love corresponding to his own fullness, and so his rest and happiness, in a being in whom he himself reappeared objectively, as if in another Ego. The entire Scriptures place the seal of confirmation upon this thought. They leave us in darkness—who could still ask why?—only as regards this one thing, viz.: *how* this other Ego, the God-man, the Son, hath proceeded out of the being of the Eternal Father. Similarly, so long as the veil of temporal imagination encircles our

spirit, the *how* of the incarnation of this "first-born of every creature," will remain a mystery which is truly and notably great, and sealed seven-fold. But the *fact* of this incarnation stands without a doubt, and it has its mightiest proof in the new moral world which this God-man has called into being.

A new era of development in the history of our race has this miracle of Christmas, like a creatorial and inexhaustible fount, as the source of its supply. Yea, with that miracle the story of mankind begins anew. Through the organic union with humanity into which the Son of God enters, the former receives a new Head. The merit of this Head, as also the powers proceeding therefrom in ceaseless streams, lifted humanity out of its curse-laden line of birth and descent from the first Adam and transferred it to another. In this new line humanity is watered by love, the law's fulfillment, is baptized with the spirit of faith and hope, the conqueror of the world, and is borne on by the blessed consciousness of affiliation with God; so that it dies undaunted the death to sin, and presses on with certain step towards the goal of complete transformation into the image of "the loveliest of the children of men." Along with Christ there was born into the world of humanity a life of child-like faith in God, of abiding in him, of trust in his ways, of joy in fulfilling his desire; a life of such fullness and perfection as

was not known even by our first parents before the fall, when they still dwelt in the paradise of Eden. For, just as they did not know of a God "who so loved the world that he gave it his only begotten Son, so, too, they did not enjoy the consciousness of standing in the presence of this God, clothed with the righteousness of that Incomparable One. Further, they possessed neither the spirit of God, through which we cry, "Abba, Father," nor that power which enabled a Paul to say: "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." True enough, that new and splendid life has by no means become, as yet, the portion of all mankind. It is even far from being the portion of all those who have been partakers of the baptism into the name of this great Prince of Life; yet these, by their enlightened conceptions, by their keener conscience and by their ennobled morals, present unmistakable evidence of the fact that, in spite of their resistance to a complete surrender to Christianity, the Christian atmosphere which they breathe has been for them a wonderfully wholesome influence. But the time cometh when Christ will be formed in all those who dwell upon the earth; then there will be, not "one shepherd and one flock" even, but "Christ will be all in all," and all things shall be "but one" in Christ Jesus. Then will be fully comprehended that seraphic psalm of praise which was heralded above Bethlehem's peaceful hills: "Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth to

men of good will;" for its prophetic signification will have been borne out, and so will have passed into reality.

"*Christmas*" is the strain which, like an angelic air, sounds out above care-burdened earth and brings to certain view an eternal end to all earth's strifes, a blissful harmony to all earth's discords. Christmas, like a peal from the bell of peace, is powerful for dispelling every sorrow, and for striking dumb every care which may infest the human breast. The frightful knot which sin had tied in the kingdom of divine sovereignty upon earth, Christmas has undone; for it has abolished that which thwarted the councils of eternal love concerning the end and purpose of the development of a humanity made in the image of God. From Christmas there streams out into the world a ray of light which not only is glorifying already every nook of sorrow with its roseate hope, and brightening even the grave with its heavenly glow, but which, at the same time, is also revealing to us the dawn of an eternal day. This eternal day is not to shine down upon an unsolved riddle, or upon antagonism, or upon clouds of grief darkening the brow of man, but it is to know only an endless song of praise, a song unbroken by discord of any sort, the song of that "unnumbered host" who have now attained unto that transfiguration for which the Great High Priest was longing when we heard him pray in the days of his flesh:

“Father, glorify me with the glory which I had with thee before the world was!”

O miracle of Christmas! Thou art the focus in which all the rays of eternal love converge! Thou art the firm ground of all joy of soul, and the inexhaustible fount of all life! We greet thee with joyous shout, we pray to thee from the dust! A new earth hast thou planted “wherein dwells righteousness;” a new earth hast thou prepared—the paradise of men redeemed from sin! Miracle of Christmas, thou which art so charmingly depicted in the apostle’s words, “But when there appeared the kindness and love of God our Savior,” come thou and intermingle thy heavenly splendor with the darkness of our life and fill our poverty with the riches, the inexhaustible riches which are revealed to us in thee! Become for us what thou wast to the great apostle, the dispeller of every cloud of doubt and sorrow. Teach us to follow, with that apostle, “Him who spared not his own Son, but gave him for us all, and who will with him freely give us all things!” Be thou for us a Nebo’s height, whence we, exulting in hope and having upon our lips the pilgrim song of that ancient seer: “Let now thy servant, O Lord, depart in peace,” may look across into the blessed land. Yea, so oft as amid the world’s distractions and sins the anxious questions arise in our heart, “whither?” and “what?” make known to us, thou sweet strain of Christmas-tide, that in the splendid

beginning of the course of God—the sending of his only begotten Son—the incomparably greater end of the same is prefigured, revealed and unalterably established. And when the last enemy knocks at our door, and the shadows of that anxious hour cast their gloom about us, do ye, O bells of Bethlehem, ring your sweet peals out o'er us; for of grace and peace, of pardon and a hope of happiness does your sweet chiming tell!

F. WM. KRUMMACHER, *Potsdam*.

IV.

The Circumcision of Jesus—Immanuel.

January 1.

New Year! This word has a clear ring, peculiarly its own, for every sensitive and earnest soul. What a birthday is to the one who on that day first saw the light of earth, and to his relatives and friends, that New Year is to all those who use the chronology of which it is a part; for it is a birthday too, the birthday of the same cycle of time and life for all. Wherefore its festival is also a birthday feast; and in every place alike it affords a day filled with well-wishing, with presents, with prayers, and with benedictions. In one place as another it gives the same double, Janus-like view; one with praise and thanksgiving back upon a closed past, the other with prayers and supplications forward to a hidden future. Thus, as from a watch tower, it surveys in one moment the old period of time and the new. And these New Year wishes and promises do not concern solely those to whom they are addressed; they have a thoroughly universal character. They have to do with the entire people and with the Fatherland. They affect all families and classes, all the circles of life and occupation; such as the pre-

ferred and the subordinate, parents and children, teachers and pupils, employers and employed, the noble and the mean, those who are well and those who are sick, the joyous and the sad. No day in the year is so rich in well-wishings as this one; every one wishes another something—something, too, which seems to him to be for the other's welfare. For the one it is health, for another wealth and temporal prosperity, for a third long life, and for a fourth the blessing of God. If on any day in the year the whole people form, as it were, one great family, it is on New Year's day. On this day the mouth of selfishness is stopped, and even the very name of selfishness is removed by self-sacrificing love, for on this day the heart speaks the speech of well-wishing and of joy.

New Year has not always fallen on January the first. In times remote men began the civil year in various months. Because the Jews observed as their New Year the first day of the month in which the Passover was celebrated (Gen. 12: 1, 2), the Christian Church, for a long time, reckoned as its New Year the Easter Festival, that is, March the first (or the twenty-fifth). Then again, a distinction was made, as is done by the later Jews, between the beginnings of the civil and the ecclesiastical years. Among the Jews the civil year was reckoned from the first of the month Tisri (September), and the ecclesiastical from the first of the Passover month. Other peoples began the

year variously; some reckoning it from August, others from September, and still others from October. The beginning of the ecclesiastical year they made to coincide with the time of the first Advent. It was not until the eleventh century that January the first became fixed as New Year's day. This day was first designated as the beginning of the New Year by Charles IX. of France, in 1564. Gradually the different Christian powers of Europe followed his example; Holland in 1575, Scotland in 1600, Peter the Great for Russia in 1706, and England in 1756.

Nor has New Year always been celebrated as a festal day. On the contrary, for many centuries the church observed it as a day of sorrow and of repentance, and preached at this time extremely vehement sermons on punishment and penitence. The ancient heathen Romans celebrated their feast of Janus on New Year's day, and exalted it to a position where it became the chief day in their Saturnalia. On this day they transported themselves in fancy back to the beginnings of humanity and of their nation, and presented as offerings to Janus the most ancient and simple gifts, bread and wine, and, in addition to these, incense as a token of their holy destiny. The consuls appointed for the ensuing year assumed their office, and rode to the capitol dressed in a white toga and mounted on a white charger, the sacred animal of Jupiter, in order to bring this god

of gods the traditional offering of a white steer as a memorial of his victory over the giants. Not only were these things done, but the people, moreover, celebrated the day amid the most uproarious revelries and excesses of every sort. At early morn, while the dawn was yet breaking, and the cock still crowing, all the street-doors and the houses were draped with laurel boughs and other garlands and tapestries. The people sent one another gifts, consisting of dates, dried figs, casks of honey, and old coins of the times of the kings. They accompanied these gifts with the wish that the New Year might bring joys just as sweet, and its every day new money gains. They visited, embraced and wished each other a joyous and prosperous New Year. They engaged in buffoonery. They forbade the collecting of debts. They instituted feasts and carousals. Female dancers danced in public places. Men masked themselves as women, and women as men. They sang lewd songs and became as much intoxicated with wine as they were with joy. In short, every conceivable kind of excess and intemperance was the order of the day. Even the night which followed was passed in song, and in unbridled joke and dance. Gay companies strolled through the streets, knocking at doors and disturbing all those who were seeking rest in sleep. Since, now, those heathen who had accepted Christianity would not for a long time give up these Saturnalia, which

were so dear to the people, but continued to participate in their celebration, the Christian Church kept Easter as their New Year, and celebrated January first as a day of fasting and penance, that it might serve as a contrast to the wild excesses of the heathen. Wherefore Ambrosius says: "We fast on this day in order that the heathen may have a conscious knowledge of the fact that through our fastings we condemn their joy." And Augustine demanded of Christians alms instead of New Year's gifts, fastings instead of revelries, and edification from the Scriptures instead of the sportive songs. They looked upon the heathen New Year as a satanic feast from which they must turn away with sadness and with horror. Up until the times of Augustine the day bore the title, "*Day of Sorrow*." The fast celebrated on that day was denominated "*New Year's Fast*," and it continued to be kept on down until about the seventh century. The Trullanian Council of 692 went still farther and forbade participation in all the remaining heathen amusements, and instituted fasts, the singing of litanies, and abstinence from all manifestation of joy. There arose at once in the seventh century, as a token of ridicule of heathendom, and probably also as a compensation in return for the forbidden heathen enjoyments, a festival called the "*Festival of Fools*." This was instituted for the Church by the sub-deacons of the Church, who employed it in heap-

ing ridicule upon the religious customs of the heathen (and later upon those of the Church also). But this feast also in time degenerated, so that in 1444, on account of a judgment from the Sarbonne, it had to be forbidden. Sadly enough, traces of heathendom and superstition are still to be seen, as witness the manner in which Sylvester night is spent among us; so that for earnest Christians New Year still affords occasions of sorrow and repentance.

Since the seventh century, January the first has obtained the titles, "Feast of the Circumcision of Jesus" and "Christening Day of Jesus." Thereby the civil feast day acquired also an ecclesiastical character, so that it became an essential part of the season of the Festival of Redemption. It stands in closest relation to Christmas, is its octave forsooth, and is a most fitting celebration with which to follow up the festival held in honor of the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. As at Christmas, by his appearing in the flesh, he became, in general, man, so the eighth day after, by his circumcision, he entered the ranks of God's chosen people and became an Israelite. Those eight days in the stable at Bethlehem were great and holy feast days. How oft may Mary have gazed on this babe of her heart, and, in holy contemplation, pondered over the words and the praise-song of the angels, as well as the visit of the shepherds and the outpourings of their hearts!

Then came the eighth day, since Abraham's time the day among Israel's folk for the circumcision of every new-born male child. The holy family is still in Bethlehem. Who were invited to be witnesses of the religious act, whether near relatives who had come along to Bethlehem to the enrollment, or the pious shepherds who had already praised the birth of their Child; who undertook the prescribed ceremony, whether the step-father Joseph, or some priest who may have been present at this place;—all these things the sacred Scriptures pass by as of no importance. Enough that the ceremony instituted, not by man, but by God himself with the Patriarch for all his male descendants, was fulfilled in the presence of many witnesses who participated in the parents' joy and wished them much prosperity. Doubtless the following old and sacred prayers were uttered: "Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, Thou who hast directed and sanctified us with Thy precepts, so that we walk in the covenant of our father Abraham. Lord, as Thou hast received this boy into the covenant of Abraham our father, help that he also be brought up to keep the law of Moses, to be chaste and to do good works." "O Lord, our God, Thou God of our fathers, strengthen this boy, and preserve him for his parents, and let his name be among the people of Israel; let his father, from whose loins he came forth, rejoice over him, and let his mother be glad because of

the fruit of her body." Doubtless, too, while these prayers were being spoken, only a few of those present suspected the deeper meaning of these words, and that they were not adapted to this Child at all. Ah! it all seemed a performance that was for him the most unnecessary and ill-fitting that could possibly be. Circumcision was a living, constant reminder of the sinfulness of human nature, and was a symbol of purification, was the prototype and shadow of New Testament baptism. But here was a Child born free from fault and reproach; one with whom there was nothing that stood in need of cleansing from sin or of ennobling; one who had already brought with him the highest nobility in the way of the true circumcision, the circumcision of human nature. The religious ceremony, therefore, could profit him nought; it only bore witness to the divine nobility of his being, and this voluntary obedience by which he, made subject to the law from the first moment of his incarnation, held himself in subjection to the entire law of God,—plainly not for himself and not for his sake, but for us and for our sake. In the sacred Scriptures he is called the second Adam, the progenitor and representative of a new and holy race. For, as he was circumcised on the eighth day, so also the whole human race was circumcised with him and incorporated in the covenant with God. Further, as the Scriptures plainly declare, "if one died for

all, then all died" (2 Cor. 5:14); and, still further, as he was buried, so we are buried with him into death; and, finally, as he was the first to arise from the dead and ascend into heaven, so we in Christ Jesus have arisen with him and been transferred with him into the heavenly life (Eph. 2:6). Wherefore Paul says (Col. 2:11): "Ye are circumcised in him;" for he was circumcised as the first-born of his brethren, in whom the people of God were to be sanctified, and as the head of his church, of which the members form a part. What a blessing is there for us who through faith enter into fellowship with his circumcision! What a blessing for us that the merit of this, his first act—or shall we say his first fate?—has not only been adapted and promised to us, but is even now effecting a real circumcision of the heart! It affects, indeed, the heart's very essence, thereby accomplishing a purification from the sins of the flesh. The circumcision of the Child in Bethlehem affords an exhibition of his entire work of redemption in its germ. To this work there belonged a complete voluntary obedience to all the laws and ordinances of God, and it was here he began that obedience. Here, then, was the beginning of that obedience which grew more glorious from day to day, and which he yielded with ever increasing majesty. Here is the inception of that obedience which he rendered first of all, as a Child, to his parents, then to the church in his

baptism, in his attendance upon the synagogue, in his keeping the Sabbath day holy, in his partaking of the paschal lamb, and in his bringing the offerings for the feasts; the inception, finally, of that obedience which, as a citizen, he yielded the powers ordained of God.

To his redemptive work belonged the sacrifice of his blood and his death; and it was here that he with pain, and as a guiltless and pure little Child, shed the first drops of his blood. This deed done here in Bethlehem is Golgotha in miniature. It is the first step on the way of martyrdom and sacrifice, the first step towards the depths of suffering which the soul and body endured throughout his whole earth life. When we consider his tender age we may say that already he has been crucified; for what the accursed wood, the hammer and the nails were to the Man, such were the sharp knife and the rough crib to the little Child. Jesus was born of woman and made subject to the law—as here, first of all, to circumcision—in order that he might redeem those under the law, and that we might receive the adoption of sons (Gal. 4: 5).

Through his circumcision Jesus became an Israelite. It was a civil as well as a religious rite, for it was the fulfilling of a duty owed the nation, and its neglect entailed ejection, or separation, from the people of God (Gen. 17: 14). Without it Jesus Christ could not have belonged

to the chosen people of God, nor had a place in the ordinances and religious services of Israel. Without it he could neither have visited the temple, nor taught in the synagogue; he could have had neither civil nor ecclesiastical participation in the mutual rights and privileges of the children of Abraham, and he could neither have eaten of the paschal lamb (Ex. 12: 48), nor conducted his threefold office in Israel. Without it a Jew never could have believed in him, nor recognized him as the Messiah; but he would have looked upon him as an alien, and would have treated him as such, would, indeed, have been compelled to do so. If salvation for the whole people must come from the Jews (John 4: 22), then Jesus must belong wholly to this people; and to that extent his circumcision was a necessity. Jesus was, therefore, from his birth until his death an Israelite, for death alone absolved him from his historic duty as an Israelite. He had first through the law to die unto the law.

The circumcision of a child was especially the occasion of its receiving its name, as with us is the case at baptism. Jesus, as the rest, received his name at this time; hence the day of Jesus' circumcision is also the day of his receiving his name. And what a name! He was called Jesus, a name assigned to him by the angel before his conception in his mother's womb. Hence this name was first pronounced by angel voice. God

himself had given it, and not mortal, sinful man. It is a name which proceeded from the invisible world and came down from heaven; it is thus a witness setting forth the importance which the hosts of heaven attached to the birth of this little Child. The Jews, forsooth, were not amazed at this name, for many before Christ had worn it, such as Josua, the son of Nun; Josua, the son of Josedech, the high priest who led the children of Israel out of the Babylonian exile; and Jesus, the son of Sirach, one of Paul's helpers who had the surname Justus. But for these Jews it was only a name, and had no special signification; or, at most, it was only a weak type of that which the world's Savior was to accomplish. Bernhard says: "My Jesus does not, as former ones, bear an empty and fruitless name; he did not have the shadow of a great name, but the reality." He is really our Savior, and has saved his people from their sins (Matt. 1:21). This name is the inner conception of all the other names which he bore, or which the gratitude and adoration of man have applied to him. In this name lies our salvation; it is a solid fortress whither the righteous flee and are protected. This name is like a balm out-poured. Every knee of those in heaven, of those in the earth, and of those under the earth, shall bow before it, and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the honor of God the Father.

There is still another name, however, which occurs in many calendars as the name of the Lord, but which does not belong to him exclusively, for many of his disciples since his day have borne it, and little children still are christened with it. This is the name Immanuel. He has received this name because of the words in Matt. 1: 22, 23: "Now all this is come to pass, that that might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: Behold a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel; which is, being interpreted, God with us." Inasmuch as God in Christ again has come near to us children of men, there is afforded a threefold consideration by which Jesus might well bear the name Immanuel. (1) God in Christ took upon himself humanity, God and man united in Jesus into one person. (2) Through Christ he reconciled us sinful men and united us to himself—"Christ has now become our reconciliation." (3) He stands by our side, and for Christ's sake shields us from all our enemies. It is a real name, such as portrays the essential characteristics of our Mediator and Savior as set forth by the similar names found in Isa. 9: 6, Jer. 23: 6 and Zech. 6: 12. The incarnation of Christ is the true antitype of Jacob's ladder, that ladder which he saw reaching from earth to heaven, binding thus the two together, and upon which he saw the angels of God ascending and descending. In him and with him heaven

and earth, divinity and humanity, are again united, and the angel world is made subservient to our inheriting the joys of heaven.

O precious day, New Year's day, day of the circumcision and christening of Jesus Christ, how rich art thou! Thou dost admonish me of the flight and transiency of time, but yet thou dost also make known to me Him who is the Father of Eternities, the same yesterday, to-day and forever! Thou dost direct me to the end for the beginning, yea, to the end of all things; but at the same time thou dost reveal to me Him who is the Beginning and the End, the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last! Thou dost preach to me about my sins, the wages of which is death, but at the same time, also, thou tellest me about Him who bears the penalty of my sins in order to redeem me from eternal death! Finally, thou proclaimest to me a new year, but dost explain that if it is to be a blest year, it must be set in line with that year which the Scriptures call "the merciful year of the Lord, the year of salvation." I must begin, continue and close "in the name of Jesus." Happy am I, for I, too, through faith, am a Christian and a partaker of the holy name of Jesus. If I am what my name implies, I stand in constant need of both law and gospel. New Year's day gives me both, not only for the year, but for life; for upon the circumcision of Jesus hangs all the law, and upon his name the entire gospel.

F. ARNDT, *Berlin.*

V.

The Presentation of Jesus in the Temple.

February 2.

THE Word had become flesh ; the true light, the light of men, had come into the world. On a journey, in an inn of Bethlehem, the city of David, the Son and Lord of David, the Savior of the world, was born, wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger. Who of the millions of the sinful human race knew of this world-wide event? But it was an event which was greater, farther-reaching and more adorable than any other since the days of creation. And yet for all that, as is God's way in revealing his salvation, this so great event was wrapped in the cloak of most complete insignificance. An angel from the Lord needs must bring the news to earth. Plain shepherds of the open fields, people without a name in the earth, were the first to whom the message of joy was revealed. In the stillness of the night and while surrounded with the glory of God, they receive the glad message sent down to them from heaven ; and as they had been the first to hear, so now, after listening to the jubilee of the heavenly host, they become to their most immediate com-

panions the first witnesses and heralds of that great and world-wide event.

And now what? After the heavenly world of spirits had been moved to festal joy through the birth of the Savior, and the eyes of earth, though at first of only a very small circle, had been directed to the wonder-Child in the manger, there is a brief silence. What occupied the reflective heart of Mary, what meditations engaged the minds of the shepherds, what they discussed among themselves after returning to their flocks, and, finally, what sort of a reception was given the event in Bethlehem,—this all is left to our own imagination to picture and approximately represent for ourselves.

Then, on the forty-eighth day, the narrative is taken up again in order to make mention of two events which hold no important place in the course of our Lord's life, but which are nevertheless worthy of notice. These are events which show how completely the only-begotten Son of the Father had to be fitted into that world of sin which he was to redeem. They indicate, too, how that quiver of expectancy which his advent had awakened in souls sentient to messianic tokens still remained unabated. These events were his circumcision and his presentation in the temple.

The circumcision will be considered only to such an extent as may be necessary for an understanding of his presentation in the temple.

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In harmony with the law's requirement "when eight days were fulfilled for circumcising him they called his name Jesus" (Luke 2 : 21), as the angel had directed. (Luke 1 : 31 ; Matt. 1 : 21). For when Jehovah made his covenant with Abraham (Gen. 17 : 10-14), he stipulated that as a token of this covenant every male child should be circumcised on the eighth day.

"But," men have asked in astonishment, "how is it possible to conceive the thought that he, the thoroughly pure and holy One, forth from the bosom of the Father, could be subjected by the Father to this emblematical ordinance, this obligatory symbol of moral purification, of the putting away of sinful nature ; or, on the other hand, that he would subject himself thereto?" Now, so soon as one holds firmly with the New Testament that in Jesus the Word became flesh, or, that the eternal Son of God appeared in the form of sinful flesh ; and, moreover, in order to redeem the fallen world was compelled to appear therein, having become in all things like his brethren, excepting sin, then the affair presents itself with manifest simplicity. For, the question as to who he was in and of himself, and in his relation to God, can with all propriety be waived in a consideration of his circumcision. This rather is the question : whether or not, to enable him to communicate to the world and make its very own his life, pregnant with deliverance and salvation, he must enter the ranks

of humanity and become a bona fide member of the same at a certain definitely appointed time. Especially pertinent is the question whether or not the holy soil out of which the human side of his nature could arise, was present only in the people Israel, so as to place him under the necessity of being a true son of Israel. So surely as, in the presence of the universally prevalent laws of human development, and in the presence of that which the council of God was effecting towards the establishment of a way for the kingdom of heaven in Israel, we must answer the above questions in the affirmative, so surely could he not have been relieved of circumcision. If he had been, then that would have happened which no one will assert did happen, namely, that not only his mother, but also a very wide circle of those about him, would then and there have looked upon him in that light in which he was not really made known until later, where he himself bore testimony of his personality and his majesty. We know with what disdain men looked down upon the uncircumcised, and what value they placed upon circumcision (Acts 15: 1; Phil. 3: 5). * No uncircumcised person could have a place among the covenant people of God, none such had a share in their rights and privileges. Attendant circumstances thus made the circumcision of Jesus a necessity. Its neglect would have been no less a matter than to cut him

* See page 191 of preceding article.

off forever from any possibility of work among his people, although otherwise he might not in his outer appearance have differed one whit from the rest of his race.

For his own person, Jesus, of course, had no need of circumcision. That of which it was typical and to which it obligated, purity of heart as the essential to holy living; that of which it was the seal, a seat in the assembly of God, and a portion in his kingdom,—these he, in distinction from the rest of Adam's children, already possessed as the heritage of his being. Circumcision was, nevertheless, wholly indispensable for the carrying out of his work. Only by this means did he, in the eyes of his contemporaries, legally become a fully accredited member of the theocratic national body. Through circumcision he was obligated to do the whole law (Gal. 5: 3). The incarnate Son of God must himself develop within the limits of the law, notwithstanding his essential freedom from law, if he, by descending into the common life of the people and lifting it up into his own, was to found an eternal redemption for those in bondage to the law.

At the same time, however, circumcision, as to its principle, was abolished in Jesus, as in one in whom its idea was completely realized. It really exhausted itself in him. In this fact is rightly found the key for understanding the extraordinary brevity with which Luke, the evangelist of the merciful Son of Man, tells of the circumcision of

Jesus, as contrasted with the fullness of his account of the circumcision of John (Luke 1, 59 ff), the last representative of the old covenant. In that the circumcision of Jesus was a consequence of his self-renunciation in general, and of his manifestation to Israel in particular, it was not, indeed, a voluntary act; still it was a noteworthy moment of his low estate.

Having taken this retrospective glance at his circumcision, we are now prepared for a proper appreciation of the presentation of Jesus in the temple. With respect to this, Luke, after making mention of his circumcision and christening (2: 22 24), proceeds at once to tell further how his parents, when the days of his purification were fulfilled, brought him to Jerusalem, in order, as the law directed, to present him to the Lord, and to bring an offering consisting of a pair of turtle-doves, or two young pigeons.

In the above mentioned procedure there were two legal regulations to be observed, one of which related to the mother, the other to the child.

First as to the mother. After the birth of a male child she was unclean for seven days, and further, after that even, must continue to abide at home for thirty-three days—forty days in all—and refrain from touching any holy thing. These were the “days of purification according to the law of Moses.” The law looked upon the impurity of the mother as a symbol of moral impurity. In doing

so it had in mind, no doubt, the penalty—including that one relating to child-bearing—imposed upon woman after the fall into sin. The law therefore regarded the mother's impurity just as it did death and all dead things, namely, as the outcome of sin and moral guilt in general. During these forty days, therefore, the mother's connection with the theocratic body was severed. Upon their expiration, the mother, in order to end her temporary isolation and celebrate her reinstatement into the enjoyment of all life's blessings, must bring a lamb of one year as a burnt offering, and a pigeon or a turtle dove as a sin offering; that is, in the combined signification of both, an offering for cleansing. In case, however, one's possessions were not sufficient for the former, a turtle dove or pigeon sufficed for both the sin offering and the burnt offering. This was a favor to the poor, and this favor, according to the evangelist's account, was accepted by the most blessed among women, by the mother of Him who for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might become rich (Comp. Lev. 12).

Upon the purification of the mother there followed, according to the law of the first-born, still another religious ceremony. This had reference to the child, and for that reason was the chief one in the eyes of the evangelist, as appears from the words, "When the days of her purification were fulfilled they brought him up to Jerusalem to pre-

sent him to the Lord." The meaning of this is undoubtedly to be derived by referring to a passage in the law which says: "Every male opening his mother's womb shall be holy to the Lord." In grateful remembrance, then, of the unmerited protection afforded Israel's first-born, and of the deliverance from Egypt, every first-born son in Israel was to be regarded as the special possession of Jehovah, and as such must be consecrated and presented to him (Ex. 13: 2, 11-16). The first-born of cattle were to be sacrificed, but all of the first-born of man must be redeemed. In place of the first-born of man, who properly belonged to him, Jehovah had taken the Levites to be servants of his in the sanctuary (Num. 3: 12; 8: 16-19). In recognition of the original obligation, upon the presentation of the child one month after its birth, that is, of course, at the time of the mother's purification, a ransom was paid into the sanctuary which amounted to about the sum of five silver shekels (about \$3.75, Num. 18: 15). So also the little boy Jesus, he who always abode "in the things of his Father," was consecrated to God in the traditional manner as soon as the flight of the forty days suffered Mary to enter the temple; and was brought for the first time to Jerusalem, the city of the Great King, in order to be ransomed according to the law from the service of the typical sanctuary. Forty days elapse before he comes to Jerusalem from the humble inn in Beth-

lehem to receive a free and valid position among his people; forty days he spent in most secluded retirement in the desert in victorious conflict with the temptations of the devil, before his emerging into the open theater of the world in order to begin his work of redemption; forty days again there were between his second entrance into earth-life, that is, his resurrection, and his final entrance into the sanctuary not made with hands!

How any one could think it strange that an offering for cleansing should be brought by Mary is difficult to comprehend. For, however true it may be that her parturition was of a singularly pure and holy nature, the giving birth to Him who has effected through Himself the purification of our sins (Heb. 1: 3), still this fact has as little to do with the law's regulation in regard to the woman newly a mother as the other fact that it was the Lamb of God himself, the one bearing the sins of the world, that she was bringing into the temple. Mary had as much need of Levitical purification as any other woman, so that not even the slightest doubt could arise as to the religious duty of her bringing the legal offering. Moreover, the aspiration of Mary, sacrificing itself in order to approach the Compassionate One who had done great things for her, must not be estimated lower than that of any other pious woman of Israel. But, on the other hand, we would have expected that the unusual circumstances preceding and

accompanying the birth of Jesus would have led Mary to hesitate "to do to him after the custom of the law" (Luke 2: 27). For, how could the ideal obligation to the temple service, and the necessity of ransom from the same, find application in him, who in his fundamental being was greater than the temple (Matt. 12: 6), who was the *real* indwelling God? Why should a ransom be paid for him who was in reality the ransom for all? Or, conversely, what meaning could a formal freeing from the obligation of priesthood have in his case, when he was the born priest, the true atoning and reconciling High Priest of the human race; especially when this, the purpose of his being, dare not, under any conditions, be set aside?

The case thus is very similar to that presented in his circumcision. If first we endeavor to look into that which must have influenced Mary, we find that to her her son had been revealed and testified to as the longed-for Messianic King. If, also, we may suppose with some degree of certainty that her conception of the Messiah transcended the one current at that time, still it is undoubtedly true that she was so far in harmony with her time, and with the prophets, that she saw in him, barring his supernatural conception, a true, yea, a typical child of her people and house, the Promised Seed of David. But then, she must be thought of, not as a reflective dogmatician of later times, but as a woman, even though she was one blest among

women. So it would have been impossible for her to arrive at the thought that that which was divine law for all the rest, not excepting the children of the Levites, nor those of kings even, could be in any sense out of place for him. But if from a universal standpoint we ask in what relation the presentation of Jesus for the sake of ransom stood to his mission and work, and why God did not step in here and prevent it, we are reminded not only of his words at the time of his baptism, "It becometh us to fulfill all righteousness," but also of his voluntary payment of the temple tax (Matt. 17: 24). As the Son, in accord with his ideal majesty, he was exempt from taxation; and, in general, the church had no sort of legal claim upon him. But in order to give no occasion of stumbling to those who did not see through this relation, he subjected himself to the legal regulation, even yet after the breach between himself and the secularized hierarchy of the old covenant had already become manifest. Similarly, again, as the "First-Born of the Father," as the "First-Born of all Creation" (Col. 1: 15), he was not subject to the claims which the temple had upon all the first-born of those under the covenant; and yet, with respect to the historic exactness as to the race in which he must appear, he was. In that while he was ransomed from the external office of priesthood in the sanctuary, he still was the One revealing the Father, and, as the High Priest of reconciliation for sinful

humanity, always abode "in the things of his Father," he really fulfilled the postulate of the symbolic legal presentation; and his royal priesthood, as a body which cannot be ransomed, are now consequently exempted in him from this presentation.

It is always impressive that he of whom the typical ordinances of the old covenant were a prophecy, is himself while here still in subjection to them. But fundamentally, nothing more is reflected in this subjection than that which he, with the clearest consciousness of his work, expressed in verbal form, namely, that he had come, not to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfill and complete them. The world's Redeemer must be born into humanity within the bounds of Israel, within the realm of that revelation from God preceding him and pointing toward him. Hence he had, furthermore, to operate and develop within the conditions and limitations of Israelitish nationality, and within the limits of Israelitish law, if, beginning within the body of revelation which was already at hand, and which was unified in all its various stages, he was, in his person, to carry out the latter's essential purpose, namely, the complete revelation of the Father. Moreover, he had to subject himself to these same conditions and limitations before he could be incorporated in the world. Only by his being obligated to the law could the grade of law through him be organ-

ically advanced to the glorious grade of spiritual liberty, and the imagery of the Old Testament law be advanced to that which should ever be typical for the entire human race. As of his earliest, so of his latest life, this was true—even up to his death on the cross. How, further, upon the presentation of Jesus in the temple, the minds of two aged ones mounted on the heights of Israelitish consciousness; how they saw in him the salvation prepared for all people; and how now the report of the newly-born went forth in Jerusalem, a report no more widely known than that one spread abroad at Bethlehem by the shepherds, and related to it,—as to all these things we may learn in another place in this book.*

GÜDER, *Bern.*

* [Not in the part included in this translation.—W. C.]

VI.

The Manifestation of Jesus, and the Wise Men from the East.

January 6.

THE celebration of the ancient Christian *Feast of the Manifestation*, or of Christ's revelation, is connected with the biblical conception of the manifestation of Christ, or, in other words, of the manifestation of God's grace and glory. The apostles emphasized the revelation of God in Christ as the new redemptive revelation (John 1: 14; 12: 11) in contradistinction with the revelation afforded by the phenomena of the outer world, which, indeed, originally were a revelation of God, an ancient and most universal revelation of God, but had been selfishly *corrupted* and *perverted* by man since his fall into the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life (1 John 2: 16). Especially did they contrast it with the Greek and Jewish deification of the world. The coming of Christ brings along with the full revelation of his being the true revelation of salvation. Thus, in general, the manifestation of Christ is the unfolding of the glory of his advent. But as faith knows of more than one ad-

vent of Christ, so also it knows of more than one manifestation of him. We distinguish a three-fold advent of Christ: his coming in the flesh, his coming in the church, or his coming into the congregation and into the heart, and his future coming to judge the world and to glorify it. Each advent, again, has various sides. In particular we distinguish in the first advent, (1) the revelation of the promise of Christ and the Word (*Logos*) of God to the yearning heathen, and (2) his historic revelation and verification in Israel. Consequently, the manifestation belonging to the first advent has two forms. The first is the spiritual proclamation of Christ to the heathen world, of which the story of the wise men from the East and their star is an illustration; the second is the historic proclamation of Christ in Israel, which was effected through the glorification accompanying his baptism and the testimony based thereon as given by John the Baptist. We will be content here with the first, since this is the manifestation of Christ which, in accordance with the original Oriental view obtaining in the Evangelical Church, is celebrated on Epiphany.

"Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judæa, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the East, and have come to worship him." (Matt. 2: 1-2.) The expression *Magi* designated originally

the Medo-Persian priesthood, whose religion consisted in a worship of the stars, and who were the counselors of the Persian king, both in private and at court. But since the priesthood of the Babylonians and the Chaldeans was likewise given to the worship of the stars, the term magi came to be applied to them also (Jer. 39 : 3, 13). They were divided into classes, and Daniel was placed over one class (Dan. 2 : 13); later he even became their director. At the time of Christ, however, the Persian idea had spread wide abroad through Syria and Arabia, and magi meant then, in general, wandering astrologers, jugglers and fortune-tellers—the mystical philosophers of the heathen world. As to the particular people to whom these magi belonged, it not only can be, but ought to be, a matter of indifference to us; for we should regard them as the firstlings, the representatives of heathendom and its worldly wisdom. And likewise we must leave unsettled whence they came, whether from adjacent Arabia, or from more remote Chaldæa, or from the far-removed land of Persia; for all these countries lie to the east of Jerusalem. In his dialogue with the Jew Trypho, Justin Martyr assumes that they came from Arabia. They appear, indeed, to have come a long journey; but this could still be true if they came from Arabia, for this country stretches far away from the border of Palestine. Enough; they came from the Orient because the star of the

Orient had indicated to them that the true Star of salvation had now appeared in the West.

We have four elements to consider in their guidance to the Lord. This fact stands out paramount, that they were pious men, pious heathen, pious wise men and philosophers, yea, *pious magi*, even in the midst of all the ambiguity of a name such as even a Simon Magos bore; for they were people who were inquiring after the Living God. And so we have here again the evidence which permeated the entire Old Testament, that God, from the very beginning, has had a people among the heathen; a people who were seeking after him and holding to certain views regarding him, in spite of all the obscurations of spirit resulting from the superstition of the times. Thus, for example, in contrast with the theocratic Abraham appears a heathen Melchisedec; along with Moses a Jethro of luminous spiritual glory, and a Balaam of blanching, spiritual mien; along with Solomon a Queen of Sheba; along with Elisha a Syrian Naaman. Further, the heathen names Job and Ruth stand as the titles of two Old Testament books. The New Testament brings to an end this contemplation of the wonderland of God's preparatory grace. It is therefore a matter worthy of remark that Matthew, who was preferably the evangelist for the Hebrews, represents that these believers from the far away heathen world were the first to do homage to the new-born Savior,

and contrasts their conduct with that of the unbelieving Jewish king Herod, the unbelieving Jewish priests and scribes, and the whole city of Jerusalem; while Luke, the Pauline evangelist of Gentile Christians, tells us of the earlier homage paid him by the shepherds of Bethlehem in Judæa.

The first of these four elements is heathen piety, or much rather, the ruling of God's grace and spirit over chosen souls; the second is the historic information, the rumor abroad among the people, the report and the fame of the King that sometime was going to be born to the Jews. That in that part of the Orient where the stock of Judah dwelt for seventy years in exile, where so many Jews continued to dwell even after the exile, and this, too, in a time when the Jews' hope of a Messiah was fully developed, when Ezekiel and Daniel lived and taught,—that under such circumstances the knowledge of the Israelitish expectation of a King who would bring them salvation should have spread abroad, is not a matter to cause us surprise; not even when considered apart from the testimony of the two Roman historians, Suetonius and Tacitus, a testimony which could have had its origin in a passage found in the works of the Jewish Josephus in which he, in a traitorous and anti-Israelitish manner, represents the rule of the Emperor Vespasian as fulfilling the hope of Israel. Throughout the East the temple at Jerusalem was known as a mysterious sanctuary; also the relig-

ion practiced at this temple was an enigma which was widely known among the nations of the world, and for the pious among the wise men of the world there was no question more significant than that as to the fundamental thought of this religion. Thus the rumor of the coming Christ had quietly spread abroad in the earth. But the fact, the present fact, that the Messiah has now been born, the wise men learn first from the star. Now, in regard to this star, it is manifest that neither a meteor nor a comet could be meant; the one passes away without halting, the other was by no means looked upon by the ancients as significant of coming salvation. According to Münter there is an account in the Chinese tables of the appearance of a new star at a time which would correspond to the fourth year before Christ. This information, however, leads us too far away, not only as regards the birth of Christ, but also as respects the *locus* of the observer. The famous astronomer Keplar has shown that in the year 748, Roman chronology, there occurred a very remarkable threefold conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn; that in the spring of the succeeding year Mars also was in conjunction; and he has further shown as probable that a still more extraordinary star could have been added to the above three planets—just as really happened in 1603. This remarkable conjunction, Keplar held, was “the star of the wise men.” Ideler and Schubert held

to the same view. The two stars assume this same relative position every eight-hundreth year, and it is said that they were in similar conjunction at the time of Enoch, the Flood, Moses, Isaiah, and, after Christ, in the time of Charles the Great. Now if Christ was born in 750 A. U. C. (four years before the beginning of our chronology), then the whole phenomenon of the star occurred two years before his birth, and it then becomes explicable why Herod, who had inquired of the wise men in regard to the time of the star's appearing, had all the children put to death who were two years old and under. The magi, of course, had to interpret for themselves this wonderful constellation. Then followed the long and wearisome journey which finally brought them, just at the proper time, to the gates of Bethlehem.

But would not God's ruling watch-care have thus confessed itself the author of an astrological superstition? It was not the astrological calculation in their faith which God confessed to have effected, but their faith in their astrological calculation. Generally, now, the imaginations of the heathen wear the garb of superstition; but in the case of the pious the germ of this superstition is a divine impulse proceeding from faith, while, on the contrary, in the case of the carnally-minded it is human and devilish selfishness. Universally, where the germ of an idea, the parti-colored with superstition, is an impulse towards the living God,

God confesses himself the author thereof, and that in a manner which will result in its being stripped of the form of superstition. It was thus that the wisdom of God acknowledged itself as the germ of the little knowledge contained in astrology and alchemy, and permitted them to develop into astronomy and chemistry. He confessed himself the author of the faith of Abraham in human sacrifices, of the faith of a Moses in animal sacrifices, of the faith in the dogmas of the pious in the Middle Ages, and of the faith of a Luther in demons. "The flame purifies itself of smoke, so he purifies faith."

And so the faith of the magi was purified, although even in the higher sense, their superstition was again but the likeness of a truth; of that truth that all stars and stellar signs of the heaven do but glorify the Logos, the fashioner of the Father's house, the Christ, the Son and heir of the Father's house. It was their messianic knowledge which directed the magi on their way to Jerusalem. But how it must have disconcerted them when, upon arriving there, they found that neither the king, nor the priests, nor the scribes knew anything about a new-born King of the Jews; when they learned that he was least of all to be found in the royal palace; and when their inquiry put every one at once into a state of perplexity and fear! Finally they are guided to Bethlehem. And if they thought it strange that they should be

turned aside from the royal city, from Jerusalem, to humble Bethlehem, how much more must they have been amazed upon seeing the stable and the utter poverty of the child's environment! Yea, most probably, too, they were amazed at the circumstance that the child was but newly born, while their star had been shining for a considerable period. Nevertheless, amid all these doubts and stumbling-blocks, their faith remained courageous; yea, so courageous that they with great joy recognized in the star a guide, a finger pointing down from heaven's zenith to that lowly house into which at night they entered. The divine inspiration in the revelation of the child and its mother sealed their faith, and they fell down and worshiped (but not in the Oriental and political sense in which they worshiped at the feet of Herod but a short time before), and opened their treasures and offered him gifts, gold, frankincense and myrrh.

Meanwhile, however, with all their piety, their knowledge and their star, they would scarcely have found the Savior if the fourth element, the word of God, had not directed them to Bethlehem. The high-priests and the scribes, assembled through Herod's order, when asked: Where ought the Christ to be born, made answer: "At Bethlehem in Judæa, for thus it is written in the prophets: *'And thou, Bethlehem, of the land of Judah, art by no means the least of the princes of Ju-*

dah; for out of thee shall come forth a prince who shall shepherd my people Israel.'" This was no doubt the correct interpretation of the passage in Micah (5: 1).

Thus the word of God developed the faith-sentiment and faith-impulse of the wise men into a complete faith. Their faith, however, was made real through the revelation of the Holy Child, by the new-born's whole life-pattern. And now also their *faith* comes into complete revelation through unlimited worship and noblest offerings.

Gold, frankincense and myrrh: these are in keeping with the homage paid by Orientals at a royal court, but here they are of deeper significance. The gifts of frankincense and myrrh point to Arabia, but could, of course, have been procured thence by the wise men from travelers passing through their land. If, as one has said, they were jointly symbols of the sun, we should attribute them to Persian reverence. According to Israelitish symbolism, however, the frankincense could represent prayer or homage; gold, majestic radiance; and myrrh, with its sweet savor, piety, or holiness. According to the Catholic interpretation, the wise men did homage to God with their incense, to the king with their gold, and to men with their myrrh; because Jesus would die as a man, arise as a God, and rule as a king. The monks of the Middle Ages found in these gifts the so-called good works portrayed; in gold alms, in frankin-

cense prayer, and in myrrh fasting. More nearly the significance of the gold was approved faith, which is one and the same with the true glory of life (1 Pet. 1: 7); of the frankincense prayer (Psalm 141: 2); and of the myrrh, that holy pang incident to the denial of the world and the crucifixion of the flesh (Jno. 19: 39; Eph. 5: 2). But through the providence of God these gifts had an immediate, practical signification; they would serve to lighten the flight into Egypt which the murderous designs of Herod made necessary.

This remark leads up to the consideration of the terrible contrast which is seen between these heathen wise men and the fathers in Israel. The capital of the land, Jerusalem, shrinks back in fear at the knowledge of the birth of Christ; but in heathendom even the regions afar are open to receive him. The high priests and scribes find in the Scriptures the allusion to Bethlehem, and direct the strangers thither; but they themselves remain in unbelief at home. The heathen magi follow their star and their instructions, and reach their goal. Herod the Great, as temporal king of the Jews called to be the legal adviser of the Eternal King, and prepare a way for him, conceived a malicious design upon his life, and concealed it in the heavy folds of hypocrisy; but the magi, though foreigners, laid their national pride, their rank, their wisdom, their noblest possessions, even themselves, submissively down at the feet

of the Holy Child, in whose presence they find peace to their souls, and through whose advent they look for salvation for the nations.

Esau, the father of the Idumean race, amid all his stupidity with respect to the promises of God—on account of which he was not permitted to retain his rights as first-born—was, nevertheless, distinguished for his rank and loyalty; and the thoughts of murder which he once harbored in his heart against his brother Jacob seem to have been smothered by the good qualities of his nature. Later, however, Edom's ancient hatred of Jacob often broke forth again among his descendants (see Obadiah); and because Esau's murderous intent thus had never been destroyed by a thorough repentance, it comes to maturity in this Idumean Herod, whose life we may find described in Josephus. The stupidity of the sire has developed into obduracy in this heir of the earthly promise made to him by the mouth of his father Isaac (Gen. 27: 40); and for this reason the loyalty of Esau seems in Herod to have departed, as a larva from its shell, leaving the old form as a mask for his devilish cunning. He inquired diligently after the child Jesus, first as to the "when?" then as to the probable "where?" of his birth. But the individual, the Child itself, was made known to him by the magi. They at first believed him when he represented to them that he wanted information in regard to the Child in order

that he, as they, might go and worship him. But the magi did not return again after their departure, and the blood-stained tyrant ordered the murder of the children of Bethlehem. Men have asked: Why does not Josephus know something of this? From our text it would seem that Herod knew how to get these children out of the way by treacherous and unexpected assaults and assassinations, and thereby avoid an act of state, a public decree; and being thus a private and not a public matter, it was passed over in silence by Josephus.

The sly politician had sought to outwit the magi, but they outwitted him; not indeed through secret vigils and astrological wisdom, but in sleep, through the premonitory insight of their pious simplicity. In their dreams there came a word from God forbidding their return to Herod, who from the first must have impressed them strangely, and they turned aside another way into their own country. Thus they, with their faith, seem to disappear in the distance; but the report of their faith has exalted them to saints in the church, for the tradition of the latter has surrounded them with a halo of wondrous glory.

Church tradition first connected the magi with the Apostle Thomas and his work in the Orient. Thomas, it is said, baptized them himself, whereupon they continued active in spreading the Gospel tidings. As regards their glorification, how-

ever, tradition has connected them with the star of Jacob, whose appearing was foretold by Balaam (Num. 24 : 17). Men have confounded that symbolical star of Balaam, typical of the Lord himself, with that which is only his sign in the heavens. "The chiefs of the mysteries," as the story goes, "had twelve men chosen out of their midst who spent annually three days on the Mount of Victory in holy exercises, in order that they might get a look at the star prophesied of by Balaam, and who finally, on the day of Christ's birth, really saw a star in the form of a boy with a cross upon his back."* Tradition likewise made them out kings, after Cyprian had held that they were astrologers, and Hilarius and Jerome that they were magicians. Regal dignity was attributed to them on the basis of their regal gifts; and this view was further approved by reference to the prophecies contained in Psa. 68 : 30, 32, and in Psa. 72 : 10, which speak of kings who bring gifts to Jerusalem, and especially in the Epiphany letter (Isa. 60 : 6), "And they shall come from Sheba, they shall bring gold and incense," etc., and verse 10, "Strangers shall build thy walls, and their kings shall serve thee," to which Isa. 49 : 7 must still be added. Chrysostom held that there were twelve of the magi (following, probably, the number of the apostles, or of the tribes of Israel); Epephanius increased the number to fifteen; while

* G. Schwab's *Romanzenkranz*.

Leo the Great held to the number three, because of the three different gifts. It was in the time of the venerable Bede that they received the names Caspar, Melchior and Balthasar. In 1162 Peter Comestor was granted the experience of finding their dead bodies; he named them Appellius, Amerus and Damasius. They have received still other names at the hands of still other persons. But the names assigned to them by Bede have prevailed, and "these are signified now when the Catholic priest on the holy 'Day of the Three Kings' enters the houses of his church members and writes on the door with chalk three crosses, together with the three letters C. M. B. and the date; a token which, taken in connection with the holy water sprinkled by him, is regarded by the people as a never-failing protection against all dangers." The names of the magi seem to contain many references to the glorious light of heaven; a fact most evident in Melchior, which signifies "King of Light." They certainly are children and prophets of the heavenly manifestation. No wonder, then, that man has given them a place among the stars of heaven, in the girdle of Orion, and that above their traditional bones, which are said to have been brought to Constantinople in the time of the first Christian emperors, then to have come to the church of Eustorgius at Milan, and after the overthrow of the city, been given by Emperor Frederic to Archbishop Raynold of

Cologne, that above these the glory of the *Church of the Manifestation* of the time of the Middle Ages even now unfolds itself anew in its most beautiful symbol, the dome of Cologne.

The Church has selected Isa. 60: 1-6, "Arise, Shine!" for the festival epistle for this day, almost the only epistle of the whole evangelical church year which is taken from the Old Testament. The gospel for the day, naturally, is the history of the event. Matt. 2: 1-12.

The custom of the Romish church of celebrating Epiphany as a mission-festival, or as the *Festival of the Conversion of the Heathen*, the Assembly of Brothers has retained; and quite recently in the Evangelical churches also, which seldom, in earlier times, celebrated Epiphany except it fell on a Sunday, the thought has been repeatedly expressed that Epiphany must be made our general festival of missions. So far this thought has not made due advancement, probably because our view of the heathen world and our activity in missions have not yet themselves become full enough of glad expectancy and festal joy. The great biblical, ecclesiastical and world-embracing historic truth of the manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ must infuse new life into this festival germ and bring it to maturity. We want to learn to commemorate a heathen world which is not a starless night-realm of Hades, but a night relieved by the starlight of preparatory grace shed down upon

chosen spirits and hearts, and enlivened by the presentiment and hope of salvation as expressed in sighings, prayers, searchings and strivings. We want to celebrate such a manifestation of the Lord as by its divine glory reveals the depth of divinity in its threefold light, and the depths of the night of heathendom with the threefold offerings of its yearning faith; a manifestation which breaks forth, as a ray from his inner glory, in that act in the life of Jesus by which he was consecrated to death, that is in his baptism; a manifestation which is foreshadowed by the victory of light in external nature, and which, meanwhile, is a prophecy of the future manifestation of the glorious light of the great God. Wherefore, when we once obtain enough confidence to gladly proclaim the beautiful and divine revelation springing from the life and death of Christ; enough to set the true manifestation of Christ the Bride in full communion with his body of priests over against the false, seductive glitter of external religion; enough to make the splendor of earth's sunlight the symbol of the light from on high; and enough to look for once, on this day, at the bright side of heathendom too, and to regard the work of missionaries, not as men's work, but as God's festival and God's joy, *then* will Epiphany become a beautiful one among the annual festivals of our church.

J. P. LANGE, *Bonn.*

VII.

Jesus at Twelve in the Temple.

The Sunday Following Epiphany.

BETWEEN that holy Christmas eve in which the angelic song of praise resounded over Bethlehem's hills and the baptism of Christ in the Jordan, when from the open heavens it was declared, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," lies a period of thirty years, during which the Savior of the world, in quietude and seclusion, was maturing for his future work. In what manner did this maturing proceed? In what manner, and under what influences from above and from without, did the tender plant in the garden of Nazareth gradually put forth its buds and then its bloom? We know, indeed, that he was the Son of God, and that his pure, holy spirit was the deepest and most intimate power affecting the motives and the development of his entire being. But we also know that just as he was "born under the (Levitical) Law" (Gal. 4: 4), so also he was born under the natural law of growth and development; and, further, since he was to be like us in all respects save sin, in this, too, he was like us, namely, that the power of his spirit could unfold

only in a gradual manner, and by the mutual alternation of reception and influence. How eagerly, in contemplating the lives of extraordinary men, do we listen to the few traits of their childhood and youth which may be told us; for we often find in them a prophetic forecast of their subsequent life. But who will draw aside for us the veil cutting off our view from the childhood and life of Jesus?

Human impertinence has sought in many ways to remove the veil. As concerns his physical occupation, the tradition that he followed in Nazareth the occupation of his father, a wood-worker (Luther: "carpenter") (Matt. 13: 55), is both natural, and, indeed, in itself probable. The inhabitants of Nazareth, forsooth, plainly call him "the carpenter" (Mark 6: 3). The custom of the times would not, because of his being engaged in manual labor—by which means even the Apostle Paul gained his sustenance (Acts 18: 3; 20: 33-35; 2 Cor. 11: 8)—exclude him from the highest culture of his people. But miracle-loving fancy has filled up that puzzling period between the wonderful beginning and the wonderful works of the Redeemer with all sorts of grotesque fables, such as appear in the apocryphal Gospels. For example, to the instructor who was about to teach him the alphabet, the Boy is said to have revealed at once the mysterious signification of each single letter, with the result that the teacher cried out,

“Woe is me! I cannot endure the power of his look, or the clearness of his speech.” On the other hand, an aversion to the miraculous which fails to note the divine impelling principle in Jesus, seeks to deduce his wisdom from all sorts of human sources; at one time from the mysteries of Egypt or the Oriental Greek philosophy, at another from intercourse with the sect of the Essenes, or from the instruction of the rabbis, or even from the Sadducees. But the Gospel account tells us that he did not receive instruction from a teacher at all; that is, he received no instruction such as we conceive of as scientific (Matt. 13:54; Jno. 7:15).

Only once does evangelical history shed any light upon this dark period, and that is when it tells of the first visit of Jesus to the temple. A precious pearl is this story. And what a splendid witness to the historic calmness of Luke is the fact that out of that veiled period which offers poetic fancy fullest scope, he has but one incident to narrate, but one ray from the vestibule of Jesus’ public history. How it sheds its beams backward into the past, and forward into the future, like as in many sacred paintings all the light falling upon surrounding objects emanates from the divine Child in their midst. How this incident reveals to us the obscure growth and development of the Child onward to the moment when the inner higher consciousness breaks forth and gives us opportunity to guess the future greatness and ex-

altation of the Savior of the world. And how it shows us at the same time the necessity to which this Child, who was so eager for knowledge, was subject, the necessity of being led deeper into the spirit of the law and the prophetic writings through conversation with the scribes of his people. How it reveals to us that within him was the consciousness of a higher divine calling, and that this consciousness, nevertheless, completely harmonized with obedience to those who for the time of his development as a child were the earthly representatives of his heavenly Father.

Jesus, abiding still in the circle of the holy family, had reached the twelfth year of his age. This was the age—corresponding somewhat to the fifteenth year with us—which, according to Jewish customs, marked the transition from childhood to youth, and with which was connected the obligation to keep the Law, and, at the same time, independent participation in the religious rites. From this period on boys were called “Sons of the Law.” Therefore, upon their going up, according to custom, to the Passover Feast, his parents took him along for the first time to Jerusalem. How the boy long ago may have yearned to see the beautiful religious rites of the Lord, and the place where his glory dwelt! How his heart may have risen with holy joy as he accompanied the rejoicing, psalm-singing festival caravan on its way to Zion, the gathering point of all

the faithful in Israel! The holy city was reached. The company disbanded, some to bring the sacrifices, some to prepare the festival meals, and some to feast their eyes on the grandeur and sensuous magnificence of this unique city. But *he* was attracted first of all to the temple; that is, to one of the halls built on to the temple, where the most famous teachers of the law delivered their lectures. There he sat "in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions."

It is often imagined that Jesus *taught* in the temple, as if a teacher's desk had been erected for him at which he could collect and distribute questions. An apocryphal Gospel represents him as already asking the rabbis such questions as, how he could be David's son and still be David's lord (Matt. 22: 41). But a child—and as such we must think of Jesus, even on the eve of outgrowing childhood—teaching and demonstrating, is a monstrous conceit which least of all befits an humble mind. The Gospel narrative gives no occasion for it. For even the astonishment of those hearing him was chiefly occasioned by the understanding revealed by his answers (verse 47). Questions and answers, that is, dialogue, was the usual mode of instruction employed by the scribes. Thus Josephus relates in his autobiography (§ 2) that when he was fourteen years old the priests of the city came to put to him questions regarding the Law. So, then, Jesus, radiant with

his pure and clear apprehension of the truth, answered the questions propounded him, and that, without doubt, from the treasures of knowledge which he had already collected through his industrious and core-penetrating study of the Law and the Prophets. By these questions the hidden wealth of his inner life was unfolded, and, like as a rock when struck by steel emits a spark, so the light of his spirit was called forth by this learned intercourse. But he, as one not knowing, knew also how to ask in order to arrive at clearness and certainty of knowledge, in order to grow from wisdom to wisdom. And, forsooth, to ask aright, to seek in the right place, is not a lesser art than to answer aright. Yet Hamann says: "To answer children is really an *examen rigorosum*." And again: "He who would stop the mouths of scribes and sophists, must know how to find questions." What, indeed, may the Child Jesus not have asked! And how he, with his questions, which were of childlike purity, and based upon the written word, may have driven into narrow straits the scribes with their dogmas!

And yet, just here, a weighty reflection forces itself upon the reader of this simple story. Who were these scribes at whose feet Jesus sat an attentive listener? Are they not the same persons whom he afterward reproached so bitterly, whom he accused of so manipulating the keys of the kingdom of heaven that they themselves would

not enter, nor suffer others to do so? May he not then and there have suspected the faults which he afterwards lays to their charge? But his knowledge of divine things, even at this time, must already have been tolerably well developed, for they all wondered at his insight; and he already had a consciousness (in regard to which later) of a special relation to his heavenly Father. A mistake, however, which in such weighty matters would not have fallen short of sin, the mistake of being deluded as to the value of the lectures of these teachers, we cannot, in his case, assume. Surely the feeling arose in his soul that their explanations relative to the will of God and the divine promises were not drawn from the depths of Scripture, that they were not offering hungry souls the proper food. Surely in his intercourse with them he must have given more than he received. Still, in historic knowledge, in everything requiring a previous and scientific education, he may have felt himself advanced by them. But their teaching, and the things taught by them, were not the chief items of interest. His future work, in which he was compelled so often to dispute with the chiefs of the people, required an exact knowledge of their method in teaching and of their views. His later severe reproof could have been a well grounded one only after he had made himself familiar with their superficial knowledge, with their perverted and scriptureless,

or rather anti-scriptural, doctrines, when he had become clearly conscious of the mighty chasm which lay between him and them. It was for this reason that he remained so long in their midst, and for this reason that he, with his questions, touched upon so many weak sides of their system. But, meanwhile, his receptive spirit doubtless seized upon all the true and wholesome elements of the religious culture of his people.

This religious conference, this interest in divine things, had so absorbed him that it caused him to forget the time for returning home. His parents left without him, supposing that he was somewhere in the crowd which was journeying with them, and hoping to find him in the evening at the rendezvous appointed for the people of Nazareth. But they search for him in vain among their kinsfolk and acquaintances, and so return to Jerusalem, and on the third day find him in the temple.

It is thought that it does not correspond with the care which is to be presumed on the part of the parents of Jesus, that they should allow this child, intrusted to them from heaven, to be so long out of their sight; indeed, it has been charged that it was carelessness on the part of Mary, and inattention to duty, to neglect the highest religious service, the guarding of the divine child, for the distractions of sensual Jerusalem. But who knows but that his parents themselves directed

his way to the temple, and supposed nothing other than that he of himself would return to the caravan at the end of the feast? Knowing well his prudence and his character, they could easily allow him considerable liberty without fearing any danger. But if the great tumult at the time of the breaking up of the feast (for at the time of the Passover more than two millions of souls were gathered in Jerusalem), whereby it became difficult for each family to get together at once, be kept in mind, and, further, the fact that the caravans generally left in bands, so that those belonging to the same crowd often did not meet until evening at the common camping ground, then the expectation of his parents to find their child at evening among their relatives becomes a well grounded one, and we are compelled to withhold the accusation of carelessness and neglect of duty.

The growing anxiety of his parents when they found themselves disappointed in their expectation of seeing him in the evening is natural, as likewise is their eager search for him until they found him in the temple, where, of course, they ought to have looked for him in the beginning. His mother's reproach is also natural: "My son, why hast thou dealt with us in this manner? Thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing." This is the first rebuke administered by the mother, but it is tenderly couched in the form of a question. Heretofore this son had caused his parents

no sorrow, for even though they had had to direct him many times and remind him of many things, still they had never found anything requiring a rebuke. "I do not at all understand how you have done this," is what his mother here would say to him.

But this gentle reprimand draws from the boy's most secret sanctuary that great expression wherein the consciousness of his higher divine calling breaks forth from behind the veil of his humanity: "How is it ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be in the things of my Father?" He means thus to say: "This apparent misconduct of mine is not disobedience, but is only an act of higher obedience. I have only followed the stronger attraction in my nature towards things above. My temporary separation from my earthly parents was only a firmer coupling with my heavenly Father, and was a holy necessity." And this procedure, coming at its own self-appointed time, seemed to him so natural, that he felt that his parents, who had sought him sorrowing—as if harm could befall him—ought to have recognized its propriety, and so have refrained from the useless search. So the fact that his answer caused his parents to feel a sense of shame is to be attributed to the affair itself. "In the things of my Father"—by this Jesus meant, first of all, of course, the house of his Father, the

temple, the place of worship and of instruction in divine things, matters to which he had given himself up so wholly. But the fact that he does not say "in the house of my Father," but "in the things of my Father," points to this, that beneath the surface of this expression lies a hidden germ which is deeper and richer in contents. The earthly temple is to him but the type of his true home in heaven. Heavenly, divine things, the great deeds and promises of God, are the things in which he must *be*, that is, live and move; they are the things to which he must give himself over completely, and which must be his food, the elements entering into his life. Yea, in his saying "of my Father," in his thus contrasting this with his mother's words, "thy father and I," he puts himself in an exclusive personal relation with his Father in heaven. We would go too far, it is true, if we should seek to find in this a clear and definite consciousness of his Messiahship, such as he afterward possessed. But still a vague consciousness of his peculiar relation to his heavenly Father, the germ of his divine being hidden in a presentiment, was present, not waiting until a later time to come to him, but unfolding itself gradually into a distinct consciousness. It is still a childlike expression, but nevertheless, in its depths, it is a prophecy of the maturity of his complete manhood (Eph. 4: 13). And the "being in the things of his Father" was, at least for him,

a learning from the Father, even though accompanied by external and human mediation.

Of course his parents could not understand the words which he spoke to them; but the latter could not, forsooth, have been fully devoid of intelligibility, else Mary would not have treasured up all these words so deeply in her heart (verse 51.) It is only that they surmised that they had not comprehended the depths of his words in catching simply their first import. They had a presentiment of their deeper sense, but no clear understanding thereof. For the development of the child advanced in such a natural, human way before them, that they, accustomed thereto in the course of time, could many times have forgotten the higher in him; and more than that, they at best had but an ill-defined conception of his excellence. It seems that Mary even, as well as others, did not understand the secret of his person until after Pentecost. And in this we can see a dispensation of Providence with respect to his training, for otherwise it could have been somewhat unnatural. It seems to us that if Mary could have had a clear understanding of the difference between her Son and the children of other people, and should have said to him, "Thou art the Son of the Most High," his personal self-consciousness would have risen above his fellows—a result which would have meant destruction to his development. But if she had concealed it from him, then there would have

been something unnatural in her treatment of the child whose divine excellency she must recognize, and yet at the same time lead and train. Only after the consciousness of his higher destiny had arisen within himself, after he became less needful of parental guidance because of his feeling secure in the guidance of his Father, might a clearer consciousness respecting the peculiarity of their child arise within his parents.

Nevertheless, Jesus still manifests the true sort of childhood, and is an example for all children. For, "He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them." Neither the flashing forth of his exalted calling, nor the impression made upon him by the words of astonishment uttered by those hearing him, nor the feeling of uncertainty and anxiety manifested in the conduct of his parents, could serve him as a pretext for abating in the least the obedience due from him as a child. He was subject to them. Just as later, although he was God's Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered (Heb. 5: 8), so the development of his childhood and youth was a constant learning through obedience up until the time when he publicly bore testimony of his Father, and his mother could no longer interrupt (Jno. 4: 4),—until the time when those were his mother and his brethren who heard and did the word of God (Luke 8: 21).

But his religious knowledge, his understanding

of himself, also was yet incomplete. He increased both in years and in wisdom. Through constant intercourse with his heavenly Father, and the influx of holy powers into the earthly receptacle, through deep penetration into the sacred writings of his people, through weekly visits on the Sabbath to the synagogue of Nazareth, through reflective contemplation of the ways and guidance of God, presumably also through an open view into the miracle of creation, which so often served him as a symbol of deeper truths in the spirit realm—through all these means his knowledge broadened and deepened, his wisdom grew. And in like measure also grace, or God's favor, rested upon him with ever increasing fullness. He found favor, too, with men. For as yet he had not, by his testimony against their foolishness and sin, molested their haughty pride and selfishness.

After the narration of this incident the veil falls again, concealing the youth of Jesus in eighteen years of darkness, until the matured Redeemer comes forth with the cry, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

C. H. STIRM, *Stuttgart.*

VIII.

The Baptism of Jesus.

January 6.

THAT Jesus received baptism at the hands of John the Baptist is a fact in his life which is removed beyond all doubt. In the Early Church the memory of this fact held a much more important place than it does in the later, as is evidenced by the *Baptism Festival*, customary at that time. This, it is true, was not introduced prior to the celebration of the death of Christ, nor prior to that of his resurrection, but was introduced as the *Festival of Epiphany*, or of the manifestation of Christ, long before the introduction of the Christmas festival. For awhile, indeed, it took the place of Christmas to some extent, for along with it was celebrated also the birth of Christ into his messianic office. Later the baptism of Jesus and its significance were forced into the background. The Reformation, even, did not restore the Baptism Festival, in spite of the fact that not only reformed theologians, but also many Lutherans emphasized especially the anointing with the Holy Spirit received at his baptism, whereby he became the Christ, or the Anointed; and in spite of the fact

that Luther himself, more than any other person, had a clear perception of the living consolation which lies in the fact of the God-man's becoming like us in all respects save sin.

As regards the historical side of the baptism of Jesus, we have, besides our Gospels, various accounts of Judaic origin. According to the so-called "*Sermon of Peter*," Jesus made a confession of his sins to the Baptist. According to others, Jesus was ordered by his mother and brethren to go and receive baptism at the hands of John, but replied, "What evil have I done, that I should be baptized? But then it could be that I have sinned in saying that." Hereupon, the account continues, Jesus allowed himself to be baptized because of the possibility of his having been unwittingly touched by sin. In harmony with the above, this account presents Jesus before his baptism as a man distinguished for his morality, but wanting in a clear consciousness of himself. His true personality, it holds, was not developed until his baptism, the latter being described as a new birth proceeding from the Spirit. Therefore this account represents that that voice which came out of the heavens cried: "Thou art my beloved Son, *this day* have I begotten thee." According to the Nazarenes, the whole fount of the Holy Spirit came upon him, rested upon him, and said to him: "My Son, among all the prophets I have searched for thee, that thou

mightest come, and I might rest in thee; for thou art my rest, thou art the First-born, the King Eternal." That these accounts are, as to primitiveness, inferior to the Gospels, is shown on the one hand by the embellishment of one, whereby a manifold voice is made to fall from heaven and a great light suddenly shine round the place; and by this, on the other, that upon the Baptist's beseeching Jesus to baptize him, the latter is said to have replied *after* his own baptism: "Suffer it, for thus it is becoming that all be fulfilled." This latter addition is intended as an equivalent of the words in Matt. 3: 14, 15, where Jesus (but *before* his baptism) uses similar language as the basis of his purpose to submit to baptism. But these apocryphal words leave the impression that an attempt, though a bunglesome one, is being made to imitate the Gospel account. For, that which in Matthew stands appropriately *before* the baptism of Jesus, as the basis of his desire for baptism, has no meaning, or at most very little meaning, when placed *after* his baptism—as is done in the apocryphal account—as a basis for the refusal to baptize John. The so-called "*Sermon of Peter*" otherwise characterizes itself as a production unworthy of confidence through its capricious and heretical presentation of things. Finally, while by their divergences from one another and from the Gospels, the above-mentioned Ebionitic accounts are manifestly shown to have

been influenced by the dogmatic conceptions of the time, the *Recension of the Nazarenes*, on the other hand, is throughout more nearly akin to our Gospels. But it, too, fails to give one the impression of primitiveness and simplicity. The broad sweep given therein to the words from heaven is for the purpose of giving expression in this passage to the relation subsisting between the Old and New Testaments and the messianic kingdom of Israel, as well as to secure this passage for the Holy Spirit—to which this party ascribed it—in order thereby to show that Christ is a Son of the Holy Spirit.

In contrast now with these accounts, differing so materially among themselves, and evidently fashioned in each case to suit the needs of a party, stands the account of our four evangelists, made all the more credible by its plain simplicity and essentially complete unity. Their account of the baptism is not fashioned dogmatically; it simply takes the place of that which was common Christian tradition. Both of these facts are particularly obvious in John's story of the baptism (1: 29). It is taken for granted by him that the baptism is a familiar fact, and it is not again formally repeated. But one sees that not one of those apocryphal accounts is presupposed, but our own Gospel, and this is closely adhered to, although John's teaching in regard to the *Logos* seems, at first glance, to conflict with it. For if

the *Logos* became flesh in the person of Jesus, then it could appear superfluous that the Spirit should afterwards descend upon him and remain upon him (John 1: 31-33). A method which was disposed to shape the history so as to make it accord with dogma, would not thus have presented the teaching as to the *Logos*; nor would it have desisted from giving expression to itself in its account of this important fact. Yet, a little difficulty, it is true, lies in the fact that, according to John (1: 31-33), the Baptist declares, "I knew him not," while, on the other hand, Matthew plainly shows that he had known Jesus previous to this time, and while, moreover, the very object of his commission was the revelation of Jesus (as the Christ) to Israel. But from the connection (John 1: 20-25, and especially verse 34) we learn that the Baptist's words signify only, "I did not know before his baptism that this was the Son of God. I had no knowledge of his divine majesty and merit." But this does not deny his having had a previous knowledge of Jesus. Neither does it say that he had not had a personal acquaintance with him, nor yet that he had not both cherished a high conception of him and expected great things from him in consequence of this personal acquaintance. Indeed, Matthew presupposes that such was the case. On the contrary, these words only affirm that before the divine *de facto* attestation of Jesus as the Christ at the time of his bap-

tism, John had had no knowledge of his divine Sonship, and that now he gladly bears witness thereto. For this latter he did, at one time bearing testimony indirectly and obscurely (in order not to anticipate Jesus' own self-revelation to those who were non-receptive) by turning aside the notion of some that he, the Baptist, was the Messiah, and at another openly, by declaring to his disciples as he sees Jesus coming again to him after the temptation: "This is He" (John 1: 30). The sending of an embassy to John by the priests and Levites of Jerusalem occurred in the time immediately following the baptism of Jesus. All other differences which occur in the accounts of the baptism of Jesus may be reduced to this, that, according to Matt. 3: 16 and Mark 1: 10, the heavens opened to Jesus, and he saw the Spirit like a dove descending upon him, while, according to John, it was the Baptist who saw this. The variation as to this fact on the part of Luke is to be regarded as much more than a reciprocal expansion. He presents the occurrence in its full and real objectivity, in that he represents the Holy Spirit as coming down "in bodily form" like a dove, so that the manifestation, accordingly, was, in its objectivity, just as much for the benefit of Jesus as for that of John. That it was for the benefit of the former is shown by the added words in Luke, telling how that while Jesus was praying, after his baptism, the Holy Spirit

came upon him, and a voice was heard whose words were addressed to Jesus. But that it was also for John's benefit appears in Matthew's account, where the voice is represented, not as speaking to Jesus, but as bearing testimony of him to others, at least to John, in the words, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Conversely, again, so surely as in John's Gospel that which the baptism was for Jesus himself steps into the background, because the Baptist did not have to give information in regard to this, but had only to establish the grounds upon which he testified with divine certainty that Jesus was the Christ,—so surely are there still in John's account traces of an objective procedure which had direct reference to Jesus, and which was itself the occasion of the Baptist's joy in bearing testimony of him. For if the Messiahship of Jesus had become a certainty to John only through a subjective presentiment, or a vision, the baptism of Jesus could not have become such an epochal event for his convictions. Although he is silent in regard to the voice from heaven, the words of the Baptist, as quoted by John, "I have seen, and (therefore) have borne witness that this is the Son of God," point to an objective event.

In regard to the signification of the baptism of Jesus, we have already found that according to the Gospel accounts more than one signification is to be assumed for it. First, through a divine sign

and testimony it brought the Baptist that assurance in regard to the Messiahship of Jesus upon which was based the certainty of his convictions in regard to Jesus, and the certainty of his testimony to the people concerning him. In more than one Israelite (Luke 2:27 ff) the Holy Spirit had effected a knowledge of the nearness of the manifestation of the Messiah, but at first without knowledge as to the person of the Lord himself; and so the Baptist in the beginning had a certainty only as to the fact that he who should come after him was mightier than he, and was before him (Matt. 3:11; Jno. 1:30), and, further, that he himself was sent that this one might be revealed to Israel. As now Jesus comes to the Baptist, the latter's spirit says to him by way of a trustworthy presentiment, "This is the mightier one, the hope of Israel;" and having this feeling, he, before the baptism, speaks the words which Matthew here recounts, and desires to subject himself to Jesus, preferring that he himself shall be baptized by Jesus. But his humility is to be manifested in another way, and also receive its reward. He is not to have any longer a mere presentiment that Jesus is the Christ, but there is to be given him an objective and divine assurance of the invisible, divine majesty of Jesus. Whether this assurance was an inner vision of the objective occurrence, a vision divinely wrought by means of symbol or mirror passing inwardly before the spir-

itual eye; or whether the form of a dove appeared even outwardly, as an object for perception by the bodily senses, is not of itself so important as this, that the Baptist was conscious that in this event he did not have to do merely with the subjective imagination, or vision, but with an objective, divinely-wrought occurrence, which clothed itself in the form manifested by a dove descending upon Jesus. However, the accounts given by Luke and John favor the second assumption, or that of the real, outward appearing of the dove in a way perceptible by the senses; and even Matthew and Mark also favor it indirectly, since, according to them, Jesus too saw the Holy Spirit coming down like a dove, a statement whereby the occurrence is removed from the Baptist's inner realm of spirit. The analogy of other historical revelations of God, *e. g.*, Ex. 3, 1 Kings 19, also points in the same direction. For, although it is true that its content, since it is spiritual, can be discerned only by the spirit, still, accompanying and corresponding activities in the world of sense lend to the inner spirit-revelation, with which they stand in intimate relation, a new and weightier moment which certainly would be lacking were it not for them, the consciousness, namely, that the revelation is independent of the subject, the assurance of its objective reality, as being specifically cut off from all dreams and subjective vision. The dove is mentioned, not as an incarnation of the Holy

Spirit, but as a symbol of it. Just as all consciousness of God is unfolded in and through consciousness of the world, so at the baptism of Jesus the form of a dove is introduced as a material substratum which shall in part denote the pure and gentle character of God's spirit, but, in addition thereto, shall also point out the fullness and the complete unity of the Spirit descending upon Jesus. The rapidity in the motion here is not to be taken as significant, but rather the weighty fact is that the spirit *rested* upon Jesus, and thus afforded a striking contrast to its capricious and ecstatic-like operations in the case of the prophets. So it did not merely brood over him—as it is said to have brooded over the waters at the time of the first creation—but it rested upon him that it might remain in him; and because the Spirit is given him without measure (Jno. 3: 34), he is able to baptize others with the Holy Spirit (Jno. 1: 33); for he who has the Holy Spirit, not in part, but in full, is able also to impart of it to others (Jno. 7: 39; 20: 21-22).

It was not so much for the sake of the Baptist himself, as an individual, however, that he was made a participant in the revelation occurring at the baptism of Jesus; much rather he was given this knowledge for the sake of the people. The first means to be used in the introduction of Jesus to the people was not testimony proceeding from himself, but he was to be introduced by John the

Baptist, who, in harmony with his calling, directed people away from himself to Christ, and that, too, with rich results (Jno. 1 : 37). Along with that comes a moment of permanent significance. In the preaching of John, repentance as preached by Elijah, and messianic prophecy—wherefore the Law and prophecy, or the Old Testament proclamation of the ideal, of that which ought to be—are comprehended in one last peak, as it were, in which they both unite to point to the presence of Him in whom law and prophecy have come to real fulfillment. This is why John is called the greatest among those born of women (Matt. 11 : 11). Now, in that the Baptist comprehends in himself the old covenant, and, though still on an old covenant basis, baptizes Jesus, the founder of the new, the old covenant is that which inaugurates the founder of the new. This takes place as a mark of the inner inseparable connection between the old and the new, as a proof that the old, in its innermost sense, must pass over into the new, and through it become old. In the Baptist the old covenant took up the office of servant and mediator of the new. This was not John's particular work, although his preaching was of such nature that the first homage paid Jesus was paid by the old covenant through him. His preaching was of such nature, further, as to lead to the recognition of the fact that the truth of Israel and of the old covenant was being revealed in Jesus ; or, in other words,

that in him was the realization of the eternal thought of God, which is so much higher than either law or prophecy that these two, John also included, are conditioned and dependent upon it (John 5: 33). So it is but natural that John, having a sense of the majesty of Jesus, desires to subject himself and give the pre-eminence to him who was from the beginning. The glory of Jesus, however, was not to consist chiefly in a kingdom of Israel, as the Nazarenes still supposed, but was to be the glory which is shrouded in self-denial and humility, and veiled in the sublimity of a love voluntarily subjecting itself to the law. So the humility of the Baptist—as also that of Peter at the feet-washing—had to show itself, not in voluntary self-subjection to Jesus, but rather in this, that it submitted to being a willing helper in the self-humiliation of Christ, and thereby became the most eloquent witness to the interdependency of the two covenants. Law and prophecy are, of course, inwardly dependent upon the idea of Christ; but they must have their historic relative independence, even with respect to Christ. For only through the Law's fulfillment can it be superseded, and especially is it through Christ's work and suffering that the law is to be satisfied (Gal. 4: 4, 5). It is therefore plainly in harmony with the will of Jesus that the old covenant should not bow before him, and, as it were, take its leave until after grace and truth have been born into the

world through his life, suffering and death (Jno. 1: 17). The old covenant, by virtue of the free, though uncapricious love of Christ, continues to have rights within itself until it has become a complete reality in him, and is, as it were, included in him. Very similar, also, is its relation to the life of believers; for, to the extent that they are in Christ Jesus, to that extent they are outside of law and prophecy, and beyond them; but to the extent that they are not in Christ, the exalted Lord in whom law and prophecy have their fulfillment, to that extent the law and the prophets are the messengers of the Lord which, though cut off from him, still, as dependents, attract and impel towards him and his society. In the baptism of Jesus, therefore, there stands a monument which tells of the inner relation between the old and the new covenants.

This leads us to the consideration of the significance which the baptism of Jesus had for himself personally. Matthew and Mark emphasize *this* phase of his baptism, while John, as we have seen, calls attention more particularly to the significance which it had for the Baptist and for the people. But it is equally as unpermissible to assume in the one case that John is silent respecting the former significance because he thought it incompatible with the dignity of Jesus (John 1: 14), as it is in the other, while considering the significance emphasized by Matthew and Mark

which pertains to what Jesus became through his baptism, to forget what Matthew (1 : 20) and Luke (1 : 35, 2 : 49) have to say about him, not only with respect to what he was, but also with respect to what he had been from the time of his birth. Some have supposed that the Johannean account, which touches only upon the significance for the Baptist and the people, was intended to suppress the synoptic tradition. But with such a purpose corresponds very little the fact that John, in his account of the Baptist, distinctly calls this tradition to mind, and that he says nothing against it, but presupposes as familiar so much of the prevailing tradition (and that was the synoptic) as is necessary to the understanding of such of the Baptist's words as he sees fit to repeat, and so much as is necessary, as we saw, to filling them out. On the other hand, it must be recognized in advance that the course pursued by the first three evangelists in their narration of the descent of the Spirit upon Jesus at the baptism leaves very little occasion for a presentation of Jesus less humble than the Johannean. But even John pursues at times the more humble course of the synoptics, while, on the other hand, Matthew (1 : 20 ff) and Luke (1 : 35) both make mention of the supernatural birth of Jesus. In this way, instead of an attempt to set the evangelists in array against one another, the question rather is raised whether both significations of Jesus' baptism may not be com-

patible with one another, that for the Baptist and the people on the one hand, and that for his own person on the other.

In order now to understand the significance which Jesus' baptism had for his own person it is not necessary indeed to say with Strauss that he was dependent upon John as his disciple; nor is it necessary to see in the baptism of Jesus a baptism unto repentance. The last supposition merits no closer investigation. Christianity itself would thereby be denied. The partisan accounts already considered, which look upon Jesus' baptism as one unto repentance, were able to preserve the semblance of Christianity only by affirming a gap—which is contradictory to the true humanity of Jesus—between his life before his baptism and his life subsequent thereto; and by annihilating through the higher Spirit which came upon him at his baptism the former man Jesus, as it were, and placing another new and pure one abruptly in his place; accordingly, as pointed out above, by making their *Festival of the Baptism* much more like the Christmas festival, and by disallowing any testimony regarding a historic Christ prior to his baptism. In this way Ebionitism is here changed into Doceticism. As to the former hypothesis as to Jesus' dependency upon John, this, devoid as it is of all historic testimony, is an idle supposition which conflicts with all the accounts, and never had any footing at all among John's disciples.

Much rather, the voluntary submission of John to Jesus stands as a contrary historic fact. It has been said that the words of John in which he bows personally before Jesus, and through which the idea of Jesus being John's disciple is rendered clearly inadmissible, are psychologically impossible; because no one would willingly resign to another the part assigned him in a work affecting the history of the entire world. The answer to this is, that, true enough, according to the world's standard of fame and honor, such yielding might seem unnatural. But it does not seem unnatural that a strong and humble man, such as John was, should give assurance of the greatness afforded him by the old covenant, and freely appropriated by him, by being, as he was, something more than a reed in the presence of those who were only apparently great; and by honoring true greatness, when it appeared, without wavering or delay; and, furthermore, by abiding within the limits marked out for him, and seeking, not to be a rival of the Messiah, but to be a sharer in the joy at the bridegroom's voice. How completely Matt. 11 agrees with this cannot here be set forth.

But what, now, is the real signification of Jesus' baptism as regards his own person? According to the Gospel accounts, Jesus felt that he, too, must subject himself to the baptism of John. He sees in the Law and Prophets—which continue to have a claim upon him until, by fulfilling, he has

passed beyond them—a divine duty also for himself: “For thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness.” He will not come forth as Messiah by his own authority, and according to his own selection of time or place; but, as he says in John (5: 20), he does all which his Father shows him. His Father, however, shows him, though in other ways, yet more especially through the economy of the Old Testament, an economy which Jesus saw comprehended in John the Baptist, and that, too, in a pure and divinely-ordered administration. If he sees in him the Elias who is to lead all to repentance, he sees in him also the divine mission through which the dawn of the messianic kingdom must be announced, and attention called to him who is then to come. In the Baptist is found not only the Law, but also, as much as is possible on Old Testament soil, the Gospel. Jesus sees in him the summit of Old Testament prophecy, whereby the last possible step in the foretelling of future events has been taken; where it is already passing over into an annunciation of the Savior’s presence, and is asking that hope now be changed to faith. Thus, accordingly, Jesus, who knew that the Old Testament contained a revelation of God which included John the Baptist, would have felt himself drawn to this God-sent man in order that to his inner conviction of his calling might be still further added its objective confirmation in the divine world of Old

Testament revelation through its last prophet. He had a right to expect that as surely as he knew that he himself was the Truth of the Old Testament, so surely would God, through the mouth of the Baptist and the knowledge loaned him, bear witness to him by setting aside the old covenant; indeed, that he through the old covenant would have the founder of the new inaugurated into his office. And since that actually occurred, there was added to Jesus' self-consciousness, which, indeed, we have to think of as being truly human, something which it did not have before. In his asking baptism at the hands of John, Jesus showed respect for the righteousness and honor of the old covenant, confirmed his desire to be subject to the Law and the Prophets both in his convictions and his will, and, through the mouth of John, obtained therefor recognition and homage from the side of the entire Old Testament. And this testimony in his favor which he received through John from the old covenant, was, indeed, a divine witness for him; but still, forsooth, as to directness, it was to be surpassed through the voice from heaven with which his previous walk under the Law was rewarded. With this comes a further consideration. The baptism of John, far from being solely a baptism unto repentance, included, along with the promise of the approach of the kingdom of heaven, the requirement to become a complete sharer in the

establishing of the kingdom of God in that form, outlined from antiquity, in which it was now to appear. Thus John's baptism was, on the part of the one baptized, a declaration of a readiness of will, a vow to consecrate one's self wholly to the kingdom of God in a self-denying resignation. However, the germ of repentance itself is a powerful longing for the kingdom of God and its righteousness in general; and the inner desire of repelling sin, and the sorrow of those in sin, are only results of it. Now, although Jesus was sinless, he was not yet perfect; the temptations and the struggles which were to follow were not yet overcome. Thus Jesus could have submitted to the baptism of John on a broader basis, and so not have gone through with an empty ceremony, a mere epideictic act. As he had to seek here the objective certitude of his messianic office—which is given in the language of the entire story of revelation—and found it in his honoring the old covenant, so here he made a *de facto* confession of his willingness, through self-denial and self-abnegation, to consecrate himself to the kingdom of God. The same thing, of course, is not true of the king of this realm as is true of its members. But the difference in the position and the duties of the two are not so great that the external symbolism of baptism, the submerging, the burial in water, and the arising again, could have had no significance for Jesus. When Christ later (Luke 12:

49, 50) said, "But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened until it be accomplished!" we can learn how Christ regarded his baptism. The baptism by John is for him, the Head of the kingdom, a symbol of the baptism which was to overwhelm him in the stream of gravest and bitterest suffering. To the symbol of this grave baptism of suffering, since it was becoming for him to fulfill all righteousness, he submits himself as an expression of his willingness to undergo the complete sacrifice of himself in the interests of the messianic kingdom. In the prayer of Jesus at his baptism, as narrated by Luke, he offered himself to God as the Lamb for bearing the sins of the world; and the voice from heaven saying, "Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," became for him a kiss, as it were, bestowed by the Father upon the Son; a seal not only of the fact that Jesus' past life had been pure and well pleasing to God, but also of the fact that this spiritual sacrifice, by which the Son offered himself to the Father, was sweet and acceptable to Him; that henceforth the work of the world's redemption would be intrusted to the Son. This inner sacrifice continued as a fundamental desire in the public life of Jesus until he was compelled to renew it, on a higher plane, at the doorway of the real period of sorrow. And the battle was fought out in Gethsemane, just as here, in an ideal manner; or, in other words, it was fought on the

basis of the spirit, and that too in the very midst of hostile forces. And the willing, sacrificial resignation of himself to God was fulfilled, even in the farthest and outermost points of its imminent fate. How much was prefigured in all this need not be set forth. The preceding has shown that the baptism of Jesus was, on his part, an act full of significance for him, not only as respects the Old Testament, but also as respects the kingdom of God which was to come through him. But his humble subjection to the economy of the Old Testament, carried out with complete sacrificial readiness of will, was also crowned with a divine gift. This is the other weighty side in the signification of his baptism. If at other times John's baptism was only a water baptism, here, at least, his baptism was more; for God himself baptizes after John's baptizing is concluded. God himself here carries out the first baptism with the Holy Spirit, the first Christian baptism, which is at the same time fundamental for all succeeding ones subsisting through its power. This side of the question we were compelled to touch upon in the preceding, but now, however, we will give it especial attention.

Though we perceive in the baptism of Jesus a formal confession of his life-resolve, and of his desire to subject himself to the will of God as revealed to him inwardly through his self-consciousness on the one hand, and outwardly through the

world's sin on the other ; still we may not think of Jesus' moral will as having the form of self-confidence, or of a self-confiding vow, but only that he confided in the communion with his Father which, since his twelfth year, he was conscious of enjoying. This communion, however, did not continue automatically forever as a personal communion, or grow in a physical manner, but it was renewed from day to day. The Son of man did not sacrifice himself without also sacrificing all the satisfaction of self which was not within the Father's spirit and power. His love of the Father was always met by the Father's desire of being loved and received ; and so we cannot speak so well of a vow of fidelity to his calling, but rather, as regards the latter relation, only of his pure, clean desire to depend upon the Father without wavering, in a communion of love never interrupted, in order to receive from Him more and more the power necessary for the work and for the suffering which came day by day. His whole after-life of prayer, so many traces of which have been preserved for us—even tearful prayers—shows this to be true. Luke, as already mentioned, does not forget even his prayer at the time of his baptism. If Jesus at the end of his course on earth prayed for his glorification with the Father ; if he attained unto the last step through prayer (Heb. 5 : 7 ff), then it was prayer which mediated for the Son of man that higher grade of personality which,

according to the Evangelists, dates from his baptism. This agrees quite well, too, with the purification which he who was the eternal Son of both God and man experienced at his birth. For the activity of the *Logos* in imparting of itself to the humanity of Jesus was continuous and progressive, according as new sides were revealed in the life of Jesus. It already had been so present from the beginning, as a foundation, that Jesus never was in any respect purely human, but was always divinely human. But the new sides of his human receptivity, which was continually unfolding itself, must, after that they have matured, actually receive that for which they are receptive before they can stand in the fullness of divine-human power. And thus his whole life was one of growth through self-limitation, a condition imposed for its own sake upon his humanity by the self-imparting *Logos*, in order that there might be a true and original growth in Jesus. And yet his whole life was divinely human, and was specifically distinguished from the prophets' mere participation in the Holy Spirit. If one then ask more specifically; What, then, was imparted to Jesus at his baptism which he had not had before? we must, without doubt, find for our answer something which may be referred to his office; such, for instance, as is contained in Acts 10: 38 (Comp. Luke 4: 18), where his equipment for the office of Messiah is described as the "anointing of the Holy Spirit."

The baptism of Jesus marks the day of that anointing by which he became the real Christ, the one anointed to be prophet, priest and king—just as prophecy already before this had set forth these three chief offices of his in their various stages. To think of some individual thing, such as the impartation of the messianic gift of miracle-working, would be insufficient; moreover, such an individual thing would remain too external and secondary for the person of Christ himself. The unity and totality of his divine-human person were exalted by his baptism to a higher grade; just as according to Rom. 1: 3 his resurrection declares him of still higher grade. The epoch of his ethical self-culture closed at the time when that consciousness by virtue of which he knew that he in his original purity and holiness stood opposed to the sinful world, and by which also he maintained this opposition, was wedded to his consciousness respecting the race in such a way that out of the two together there grew up in him a merciful desire to save the world from error and guilt, from sin and death. But the desire for this work for which he was adapted, was borne on after his baptism by the divine-human consciousness of his inner and outer calling.

Finally, it is yet to be seen how the descent of the Spirit of God upon Jesus at his baptism agrees with his natural, divine Sonship through the *Logos*, as possessed by him from the day of his

birth. It appears indeed that his baptism brought to him through the external instruction from above something which he did not have before ; and that, too, when the *Logos* was present in him, and when, in consequence of this last fact, it would be expected that the divine-human development would find its inner course complete within the self-unfolding man, and through the increasing expansion of the activity of the *Logos*. The answer is found in the sentence, "God knows no above nor beneath." These space designations have their significance, but it is confined to the world. The dependent, the receptive, is, in respect to God, the "beneath;" hence it is possible to speak of an "above" and a "beneath," even if the descent of God's Spirit upon Jesus' receptive humanity be regarded as the self-impartation of the *Logos* to this humanity, as is necessary in order to avoid rendering the incarnation of the *Logos* an idle treasure, and the impartation of messianic power, a broken and abrupt procedure. On the other hand it must be noted that the New Testament, in its joining with the Old, everywhere, even in Christ, designates the divine as Spirit—that is, to the extent that the divine has been appropriated by man, and become a part of his inner being—and never makes use here of the word *Logos* (Comp. Jno. 3: 34; Matt. 12: 28; 1 Cor. 15: 45 ff; 2 Cor. 3: 17; Rom. 1: 4; Heb. 9: 14;

comp. 7: 16). This accords well with the fact that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Son, as well as from the Father, or, rather from the Father through the Son. That the anointing of Jesus with the Holy Spirit harmonizes with his participation in the divine essence from the day of his birth, and that it would be false to emphasize his anointing at the expense of his holy and wonderful birth, or his birth at the expense of his anointing, is shown not only by the Evangelist John, but also by Luke 4: 18, where that which Jesus was before his baptism, and what he became by it, are placed side by side: "The spirit of the Lord is upon me, *therefore* he has anointed me."

The baptism of Jesus is thus a fact so significant and epoch-making in the life of Jesus that it well merits the prominence and the festival accorded it by the earliest Christianity. Its light has been extinguished by the Christmas festival only because of a one-sided doctrine concerning the person of Christ, which left remaining for the baptism of Jesus only a precarious signification. That the *Festival of the Gentiles, and of Jesus' First Visit to the Temple* (Epiphany and the Sunday following, according to the Pericopes of the Church) belongs very properly to the Christmas cycle is undeniable. Hence a restoration of the *Festival of the Baptism* would have to make use of the second Sunday following Epiphany, whose pericope is the Gospel account of the baptism.

But this festival will be revived as a part of the Christmas Festival only when a thorough insight into the divine-human development of Jesus, and into the connection between his person and his work, has become a common endowment of the Evangelical Church; and when, along with that, the distinction, as well as connection, between the birth of Jesus and his anointing be recognized. From the above it becomes manifest that—to say nothing of its rich symbolism—the celebration of Jesus' baptism just for the sake of an understanding of the inner connection between the Old and the New Testaments, a connection which at present alternates often between contradictory and one-sided views, could yield a rich harvest of good. But probably the richest fruit to be reaped by the church of the present from such a restoration of the early Christian festival of the baptism of Jesus, would be the gain for the now much be-clouded understanding of the sacrament of baptism; a gain which would increase in proportion as the life and faith of the Church reverently penetrated deeper and deeper into this sacred historic fact in which, as we saw, the foundation of Christian baptism lies.

J. A. DORNER, *Berlin.*

IX.

The Temptation of Jesus.

First Sunday in Lent.

IT WAS out in the wilderness, and during the period following immediately upon his baptism and preceding immediately his entrance upon public life, that Jesus laid the foundation stone of the world's salvation. Because, it was here that he resisted the wily onsets of the devil, and it was here that the event occurred which includes within itself the germ of all the Lord's subsequent activity as Savior. What took place here in seclusion between him and the prince of this world alone, this, we may assume, the Lord made known to his disciples during the forty days intervening between his resurrection and his ascension, when he conversed with them in regard to the kingdom of God, in order that they might learn to understand properly that which they had seen with their eyes, which they had known, and with respect to which, while in his service, they had to guard themselves most carefully. With this same end in view, the Holy Spirit has had this story recorded for us. He desires then to enlighten us as we ponder over the circumstances of Christ's temptation, the points in which he was tempted, and the effects of his victory.

In the measure in which Jesus as a man had developed, he had been brought up to a consciousness of the fullness of the God-head dwelling in him, and, further, to a knowledge of the purpose which the Father had in him, namely, that he should destroy the works of the devil upon earth and transform the earth-world into the kingdom of heaven. The seal of his divine Sonship and his consecration to the office of Mediator had been given him at the time of the baptism, which he received at the hands of the herald of the approaching kingdom, when the Spirit came upon him and a voice from heaven said: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." This same Spirit now leads him into the wilderness not far from Jericho, where God, in order to prove him, subjects him to the temptation of the devil, just as He did the first Adam in Paradise.

The only begotten Son of God could be tempted like Adam because he bore in himself the same human nature which was given Adam at creation. True, the eternal Word of God belonging to Christ's inmost being united with this humanity into a person. But the incarnation of the Word through the council of God's free love, which the Word comprehended in itself, took place in such a way that the humanity in the person of Jesus did not as yet enter into the full and complete use of the peculiarities and powers belonging to the divine nature with which it was associated and

united. Yea, it is not enough that Jesus in the days of his flesh voluntarily gave himself over to the exercising of divine power in all directions looking towards redemption. Although his human nature, through its not being born of sinful man, was possessed of primitive righteousness, still, through its being born of woman it did not have even such power as that with which the human nature of Adam was endowed. Jesus took upon himself the form of a servant, became manifest in human nature—weakened and humiliated through the fall—and lived on earth as a man, being exposed to the hostile powers of nature, to death and the power of hell; so that the temptation must have been more powerful for him than it was for the first Adam.

Just as in the nature of Adam, so also in the human nature of Christ, in and for itself considered, there lay the possibility of a fall. But as the roots of Jesus' humanity were interwoven in an inseparable manner with the being and life of God, it is an impossible thought that defeat, such as was met with at the beginning of the race, could be met with again. God did not want to annihilate fallen man. He did not want, either, to begin the work of creation anew, and make a new man who, like the former, could be overpowered by Satan. He wished, on the contrary, to redeem sinful man. Therefore he sent into the world his

Son, whose warfare with the powers of darkness would, of necessity, end in victory.

This impossibility of falling, which has its basis in the nature of the God-man, does not, however, in any way exclude the meritoriousness of victory. The struggle was not a feigned one. In voluntarily emptying himself Jesus stood as a man in the heart of the battle; and no Christian, therefore, can dare say: "Jesus cannot serve as my model, for *he* was in the form of godliness." Yea, just as Jesus could not sin, because he was in the Father, and the Father was in him, so the Christian who is in Christ, amid all his temptations and conflicts will be preserved from falling away into sin. "The one born of God does not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God" (1 Jno. 3: 9). Jesus was permeated with the thought that he was the Son of God, and could never forsake God's companionship. We, too, should have the confidence that we are, and shall continue to be, God's children. Victory is the fruit of just such faith in the certainty of victory: our faith is the victory which overcomes the world (1 Jno. 5: 4).

Immediately after Jesus' receiving the Holy Spirit without measure at his baptism, the temptation began. Just as often with us there comes into our souls such a change of conditions that in a moment the richest fullness of spirit is succeeded by seasons of dearth, so was it with him who be-

came in all respects like his brethren. Here as well as during that period of his earth-life extending from Gethsemane to the moment when he cried, "It is finished!" in both these decisive moments of his life where he, as the Mediator between God and man, had to carry out the work of the reconciliation of God and the redemption of man, he saw himself abandoned by his God. To this condition, in which his human spirit was deprived of the light of the divine Spirit, and was surrounded by sorrow, corresponds his fasting in the wilderness. As with us in times of sorrow the desire for food and drink takes flight, so Jesus fasted here for forty days and forty nights. This fasting, too, belongs to the meritorious works of Jesus, done in atonement for our sins. It stands out in bold contrast with our first parents' sinful and fatal eating in paradise.

This forty days' fast itself, which in the regular course of nature is something impossible, gives us a glimpse into the actual details of the whole event. It is impossible that the temptation took place within the soul of the Savior, and that this presentation of it as an actual external event is only a poetic fancy; for in such case the wicked thoughts by which he was besieged would have had their roots in his own soul, and he, as one who was himself tainted by sin, could not have been the Savior of sinners. The temptation of Christ was an external fact; but it does not lie

within the limits of the visible world, so that it could have been seen by earthly eyes. When Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, the lower world of darkness became manifest as it stormed forth to meet him. The other incidents of the story, too, the placing upon the pinnacle of the temple, and the conducting to a high mountain, where was shown him all the kingdoms of the earth and the glory of them, point to some supernatural procedure, to a movement of the Spirit no longer bound by the chains of corporeality, and to a supersensuous vision. It was in the spirit world that the first battle was fought in that great warfare which Jesus, later on, waged against those human tools of Satan which were at work in the material world. Thus, too, after the victory completed at his death, the first triumph was celebrated in the unseen world,—when Jesus descended into Hades; a triumph which, like the struggle of the temptation, afterwards was made known, and will be fully revealed whenever Christ shall come to execute judgment.

Our High Priest was tempted in all points like as we are, and yet without sin (Heb. 5: 15). This means, primarily, that he was not tempted by sin already resident in him in some such manner as it is present with us. When the tempter proceeded in person to him, he did not find in him any more than in the first human beings—in whose case a serpent was his tool—any base lust already pres-

ent which he could goad on, as he does constantly with us through his unseen messengers, or through the children of unbelief. Just as was true of the first human beings, so it was with him, the temptation came upon him from without. Christ was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin. This means, therefore, in the second place, that he was tempted without sin, *i. e.*, evil desire, taking root in him. Pictures of a possible by-path swept with their charms before him, but the lusting after it, which Satan thought to infuse into him, and which we already have present with us in our natures, Jesus did not allow to enter his soul; he did not take it up into his desire so that the requests made of him by Satan could become inner requests made to his will by his desire. He would then have had to oppose lust, broken in upon him, just as we have to oppose the lust which is already present with us. The struggle continued the forty days, and was, even in the last and most powerful onset of Satan, plainly an outward struggle, a struggle between Christ and the devil, like that one seen by John, which took place between Michael and the dragon. At no time did it become a struggle of Christ with himself, an inner contest between flesh and spirit. The struggle, moreover, was one and the same with victory; it was a continuous victory. Adam fell because he gave way without a struggle, and allowed himself to become inwardly captive to

the enticing pictures of lust which were held out before him. Christ, on the other hand, gained the victory because he resisted—resisted without wavering, and did not in the least permit his pure soul to be touched by the base demands made by the devil upon him. Satanic lusts never had been his, nor did they ever become such.

In a threefold manner the devil sought to carry out his design of destroying in the germ the work of reconciliation and redemption. He sought to entice Jesus to leave off wholly from his divine office, on account of the suffering and privation incident thereto, and, instead of through self-abnegation subjecting himself on man's account to the punishment of sin, to make use of his divine power for the satisfaction of self: "*If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.*" He sought in the next place to move him to conduct his work as Messiah in a false way; that is, move him to confirm himself through a miracle (which only begets astonishment and confuses the senses) as the great, divinely-sent Prophet and King, in order thus to enter into the expectations of the people, who were hoping through the Messiah to attain unto outer glory, and so become a fleshly Messiah, in accord with the Jewish idea: "*If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down; for it is written, He will give his angels charge concerning thee, and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest*

thou dash thy foot against a stone." Finally, he desired to entice him to forsake the way of humility, of gentleness and of patience; to found, through the use of unholy means, a kingdom of earth full of unreconciled and unredeemed men, and so become the opposite of the Messiah—the Anti-Christ: "*All this I will give thee if thou wilt fall down and worship me.*" But Christ turned all these temptations aside by holding on in firm faith and obedience to the promises and the law of God.

Through this first decisive act of the Savior, which turned his whole life into the way of representative suffering and obedience, was laid the basis for the reconciliation of God to man, for our acquisition to the kingdom of God. God's will that the separation between God and man be abolished by Jesus taking upon himself our guilt and punishment; God's will that the claims of the devil upon a humanity led astray by him be taken away from him; God's will, finally, that through the complete obedience rendered by the humanity of Jesus a way be opened up for us into eternal glory;—all this will of his Father the man Christ Jesus here makes his own firm and irrevocable will. He did this, too, not merely in the way of a proposition, indeed, but in reality; for upon this, his first immediate encounter with the prince of this world, he put his will into operation.

Through this first decisive act of the Savior the basis was laid for our reconciliation to God, for our being gained for the kingdom of God, and so for the real building up of this kingdom within fallen humanity, after its becoming a possibility through Christ. The earliest result, the first reward of his victory, was that his human nature now began to be penetrated by the divine nature with which it was united into one person. A further result was that here he began that gradual elevation to the position from which as a man he took a complete and unbroken part in the exercise of divine power. The Lamb here became worthy already to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and glory and blessing. And when now the Lord sends us the Holy Spirit, when he through this Spirit in the church by word and sacrament leads men to faith, keeps them in the faith, and, as King, rules over his church, then is continued that unfolding of Jesus' power which was begun in the wilderness. Moreover, when Michael engages even now in a conflict with the dragon, when the former, who, through the dragon, lost his right to the possession of the kingdoms of earth, succeeds in slowly but surely depriving the latter of the ground still held by him through rescuing from him the individual, unregenerate souls who still belong to his kingdom, as well as the nations who still serve him in blindness, and in this way brings judgment upon

the prince of this world, then again is the power of Jesus' victory unfolding. The calling and collecting of his disciples in the days of his flesh, and the miracles which he began forthwith to do, were immediate effects of this victory.

Finally, through that first decisive deed, the overthrow of Satan, of his angels, and of his servants, and their precipitation into the pit of fire, and the consequent completion of the kingdom of God upon earth, is guaranteed and assured. That is shown by the story's close: "*And lo! angels came and ministered unto him.*" This fact sets forth, symbolically and prophetically, that close relationship between heaven and earth which is to be completely established on the day of judgment. The first miracle which Christ, who was certain of the outcome of his work, performed at the wedding feast in Cana, has this same prophetic and symbolic significance. The marriage points to the marriage of the Lamb, and the changing of the water into wine points to the coming glorification of all earthly things.

The battle still is raging. In the temptation of Christ were determined for the church the outlines of its activity in the service of the Lord.

Christianity forsakes Christ and goes outside its province when it begins to consider earthly possessions and fleshly well-being the *summum bonum*, when it makes use of created things simply for satisfying its lusts, caring for naught but

bread, body and life. Christianity perishes and becomes a carcass, about which the eagles gather, whenever it will not, by repentance, build up through the Word the kingdom of God, but, amid the development of outer glory, or in parading the spiritual gifts loaned her, aims only at material impressions, and by its empty forms presents the kingdom of God as an external kingdom, as one already complete, and capable, further, of being externally appropriated without exertion, without the inner struggle of repentance. Christianity becomes anti-Christian when it disdains the form of a servant; when it refuses to carry on God's work as a decided opposition to all ungodliness; when it shuns the cross and the persecutions incident thereto, and when, finally, through entering into the spirit of the world, and through gathering earthly treasures, it seeks to acquire a position of outer authority, in alliance with the powers of earth, powers which in their ruling are influenced by Satan himself. When the Church undertakes to transform the world into the kingdom of God by subjecting the world to itself externally, it only places the spiritual power inherent in itself at the service of Satan, and conquers the world for Anti-Christ.

Every individual Christian is opposed by the devil, who, although defeated by Christ, still hopes to be able to gain the victory over Christians. We overcome if we hold fast the joyous

certainly which we derive from the victory of Christ, the certainty that our guilt has been blotted out through Christ, that in Christ we belong to God's kingdom of grace, and that the prince of this world no longer has any part in us. Wherefore we overcome largely on account of Him who first loved us.

SOUCHON, *Berlin.*

X.

First Sermon of Jesus, and His Teaching in
General.

May 1.

IT WAS in Nazareth, in the city in which he was reared, that Jesus appeared on a certain day in the synagogue, and in a manner which indicated that this was a highly significant moment in his life opened his mouth and began to speak. He had not entered the synagogue as a stranger; the fame of his words and his wonderful deeds had already preceded him. Full of the Holy Spirit which had been poured upon him at the time of his baptism in the Jordan, and strengthened and assured by this Spirit through his overthrow of the devil in the wilderness, Jesus, through the words which he taught in the synagogues of Galilee, had already entered upon his work. Then he came to Nazareth also. Although he knew that the common mind of men would stumble at his words, and especially at his person, which is the source and foundation of all his words, nevertheless, he felt that he owed it to the place of his rearing as a debt of gratitude to establish there a special memorial of his words, as if desiring thereby to fulfill all righteousness. But in small things, as well as great, he was given full assur-

ance of the truth expressed in the words of the Evangelist John: "He came to his own, and his own did not receive him." It was Jesus' custom to visit the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and we can easily represent to ourselves how he, in all the years which he spent at Nazareth in holy retirement, doubtless allowed no Sabbath to pass without visiting the synagogue and hearing there the word of God, and so demonstrating how he continued faithful to those words of his dawning youth, "Must I not be in that which is my Father's?" (Luke 2: 49.) But now he comes forth as the one who, at his baptism in the Jordan, and in the presence of all the people, had been anointed; as the one solemnly declared by the Father to be the Christ; as the one who, in opposition to the devil's illusive representations of a messianic merit to be arrogated to himself contrary to the word of God, had proved himself, through obedience, the true and real Messiah. It was as such that he entered the synagogue of Nazareth. He arose to read from the Scriptures. If it was arranged that each member of the congregation should thus read, and even give instruction, how much more for Him who is already preceded by the genuine praise of his people! Eagerly they all hung upon his lips.

It becomes, then, a significant fact that the subject matter of his talk in Nazareth is precisely the same as that which came to him from God at the

time of his baptism; the testimony, namely, that he was the Christ. It was within the natural fitness of things that he should first of all in Nazareth, and among his fellow-countrymen, by whom he was known as the Son of Joseph, announce himself as the Christ, the Son of God, although he knew that this testimony in regard to himself would not fail to receive the seal of all testimony—insult and persecution. And this announcing of himself as the Messiah, as the Anointed of God, was by no means based upon his own utterances regarding himself; for he plants himself and his hearers alike upon the word of God. He makes reference to a text, and expounds it; but the interpretation of this text becomes itself a testimony regarding his own person. Hence, we may still call this sermon in Nazareth his first, as the Evangelist Luke has done (4: 16-22), even though it is known (Luke 4: 15) that Jesus had previously taught in the synagogues. It is the first sermon where, in connection with the immediate testimony of God concerning him, and in the full experience derived from his heavenly baptism, he definitely and distinctly declares himself as the Christ, and becomes certain of the inner relation between his office as Messiah and the coming of the kingdom of God.

In this his first sermon, Jesus, as was his custom, adjusts himself to the prevailing custom and order, changing the latter with a quiet, gentle

hand only to such extent as is necessary for the purpose of his divine mission. The custom in the synagogues of reading the Scriptures according to certain divisions made in the Law and the Prophets, is familiar; out of it, indeed, arose the custom in our church of dividing the New Testament into gospel and epistle pericopes. Probably a pericope from the prophet Isaiah was the order for that day, so that Jesus could easily have added to the one already read the passage referring to himself. He arises; he receives the sacred book from the hands of the eager and expectant servant of the synagogue. It was the roll wherein was written the book of Isaiah. And as he now unrolls this scroll (or, as our German translation puts it, "when he had turned the book"), he finds the place in Isaiah (61: 1 ff), and reads what is written there: *"The Spirit of the Lord is with me, wherefore he hath anointed me, and sent me to proclaim the gospel to the poor, to heal the broken hearts, to preach to the captives that they shall be set free, and to the bruised that they shall be relieved and set free, and to preach the acceptable year of the Lord."* These words of Isaiah, as quoted by the evangelist, do not agree, literally, either with the original Hebrew text, or with the Greek translation of the same. But the thought is essentially the same. Where the original text speaks of opening the prison of those enchained, the evangelist speaks of the opening of

eyes that are bound, of sight for the blind, and, probably in remembrance of Isaiah 58: 6, adds the expression concerning the bruised, that they should be relieved and set free. In reality Jesus could not have found in all the Old Testament better words with which to introduce himself to his people and to the world. It is the servant of the Lord who is speaking there in the book of the prophet Isaiah, the servant sent of God to bring redemption. With that as his purpose he brings in his own person, subjects it to suffering in order that he may thereby bear and abolish the sins of the people. He stands in a most intimate relation with Jehovah; he is his Anointed, and this is why God's Spirit *rests* upon him. Yes, this Spirit *rests* upon the Messiah; it does not simply seize him, as it were, in its flight and bear him aloft to get a vision of the divine truth, but it remains upon him, with him, in him; it fills his whole soul; it is the power from which arises every word and every thought, the power which lives in him, even when he is silent, and when he is not visibly at work. This servant of God, this Anointed One, who is full of the Spirit, has now received the mission of bearing a joyous message: They who are blinded by the darkness of ignorance may now see; they who are broken and bruised by the misery of sin and distress are now to be healed and delivered from all misery; souls who are bound by Satan, as in a prison, shall be loosed and set

free; a new time is at hand, a time of grace, of revival, of joy. As in the year of Jubilee everything returned into the former happy and prosperous condition from which selfishness had cut men off, so now is beginning the eternal year of Jubilee, the acceptable year of the Lord. The person of this servant of God who is making this proclamation is itself both a witness and a surety of the truth of that which he is proclaiming.

After Jesus had read these words of the prophet, after he had closed the book and given it back to the servant, he sat down; for the teachers of the synagogue were accustomed to sit while they interpreted and applied the word of God. But all who were assembled in the synagogue must have conceived a presentiment that something of especial interest centered in him who had just been reading. He, as well as his hearers, felt that whatever he said now must be something decisive. And so he began to speak: "To-day is this Scripture fulfilled before—yea, rather, as the original text has it, *in your ears*." It is undeniable that the evangelist gives here only the fundamental thoughts, the theme—as we are accustomed to say—of this sermon of Jesus. But this is sufficient to enable us to perceive the one meaning of that moment. What at the birth of Jesus rang out as a message from heaven's court—"Unto you this day is born a Savior"—that joyous "*this day*" is now voiced by the mouth of the Savior himself.

And that is fulfilled which is written in the prophets, fulfilled in the most immediate reality and in the most immediate present; in their ears are ringing the words of Him who is himself the object of all prophecy. Prophecy and fulfillment are wonderfully united in this one moment; the new covenant stands there in person upon the basis and ground of the old. And so really powerful is the impression which the words of Jesus make, such a certain consciousness of the truth of what he is saying does he effect, that all those hearing him bear witness for him to this truth, add their yea and amen thereto, and cannot restrain their astonishment. But what is there about him that first of all causes them to wonder? The evangelist relates that they wondered at the words of grace, at the words full of charm which proceeded from his lips. They wondered at the complete unity of his words and his person. They see that this is not a speaker who has difficulty in bringing forth words from his inner being, nor one with respect to whom men feel that his words are not such as express the thoughts of his own deeper self; but they see, on the other hand, that he is just as little a speaker whose words tell of more than is really at the bottom of his soul. His words spring up in his heart, and cross his lips as the full and natural expression of his inner life. And if this be the most incomparable of all graciousness, that the soul break through the

mask of externality which heretofore has concealed it, and extends itself, as it were, so that it becomes manifest, then this is the most charming and gracious feature of Jesus' preaching, that his whole soul, as the soul of him who is the image of divine glory, lies wholly in his words, and permeates them with its bright, clear light. His preaching is a revelation of himself, the revelation not merely of truth above him, but of a life which is the truth; his charm is that of resplendent grace.

But this impression, which none of the hearers in the synagogue could escape, was itself perplexing. With their wonder was mingled a feeling of surprise, surprise that divine life should be revealed to them in the words of a fellow-countryman. "And then," they say, "is not this the Son of Joseph?" Although they probably were not at first conscious of the fact, there already lay in this question a doubt as to whether the speaker was really the Messiah; for, in accord with the traditional view, they represented the Messiah to themselves as one who should come forth from God and carry on his work amid striking splendor. It is true, indeed, that Jesus had already wrought some wonderful deeds at Capernaum, where he had been for a short time previous to his present visit at Nazareth. But the mind of the Nazarenes was fixed on seeing some such miracles performed among them—a fact which Jesus well knew. He saw that the impress of his words

awakened only the common impulse of his fellow-townsmen; the whole narrow range of spirit of a small and cramped municipality lay uncovered before the eyes of his soul. The inhabitants of the little town of Nazareth are in exultation at the prospect of gazing upon their famous Fellow-townsmen, of seeing him give play, as it were, to the wonderful power abiding in him, and thus bring renown upon their unknown locality. With the smallness of mind incident to such small towns, they were jealous of Capernaum, a neighboring village; they did not want that it should have the preference, that it should be the theater of the great deeds of the New Prophet. All of this Jesus reads in the hearts of those present; he does not see in this mass of discordant and indistinct feelings, in which at one time astonishment, at another desire, and at another vexation is uppermost, a living trace of a true thirst for salvation. There is no comprehension of the words of Holy Scripture read in their presence sufficient to move them to bow to Jesus and recognize in him the fulfillment of all Scripture.

Such moments, when Jesus gives a revelation of his life, are always moments of decision and separation. He who had just finished speaking most gracious words has no hesitancy in resorting even to cutting words in order that this decision may be effected. He reveals to his fellow-townsmen their thoughts; he says to them: "You will apply

to me the well-known proverb: 'Physician, heal thyself;' which is to say, 'Reveal through yourself the wonderful power which is given you,' or, 'Display yourself in the messianic glory of which you allowed traces to be discovered while at Capernaum.' " "But," he thus continues, "I also will answer you with another proverb: 'No prophet passes for anything in his own country.' " At the very beginning of his work as teacher insight is given him into the whole secret of God's council, of the course which he and his Gospel are going to traverse in the world. We must repeat it: here, in the smallest circle, was revealed the meaning of that which was written with reference to his whole life: "He came to his own and his own received him not." The Nazarenes, who knew him personally, by their conduct only foreshadow his rejection by all his people. That which certainly most of all impelled the men of Nazareth to drive from their midst their great Fellow-townsmen, was the intimation that the Gospel would also be carried to the Gentiles. Jesus reminds his hearers of the precedents afforded by Elijah and Elisha; how that in the time of the great famine in Israel Elijah was not sent to any of them, but only to a widow of the Sidonians, a heathen people, and how that in the time of Elisha there were many lepers, yet one alone was cleansed, and he not an Israelite but a Syrian. These words not only aroused somewhat their local patriotism, but

stirred up their entire national feeling to rebellion ; the sacred privilege of Israel seemed to them dishonored and betrayed by these words. They rise up ; they thrust him forth from their city ; they lead him to the steep cliff upon which their city is built, and are about to throw him down and thus destroy him. But his hour has not come yet ; calmly and undisturbed he passes through their midst and goes his way.

This first sermon of Jesus at Nazareth which we have just now represented to ourselves is a fundamental likeness and prototype of all the subsequent teaching of our Lord. As teacher ("Master") Jesus was commonly addressed by his disciples, by the people, and even by the rulers (Comp. Mark 9 : 17 ; Matt. 8 : 19 ; 9 : 11 ; Luke 9 : 39). He concealed his divine glory under the cover of a teacher ; and it was his words especially by which his glory was to be revealed to the one receiving it in faith, and his words, again, which were to burst forth in judgment upon the unbelieving (2 Cor. 2 : 15, 16). Just as Jesus entered the synagogue at Nazareth for the purpose of speaking, so at Capernaum, and wherever else his course might lead him, he was accustomed to teach in the synagogues on the Sabbath day—except at Jerusalem, where he taught in the temple (Mark 1 : 21 ; Matt. 4 : 23 ; Luke 4 : 31, 44). But his teaching was by no means limited to this ; wherever crowds of people thronged about him, in the open field, on the

shore of the sea, or on the top of the mountain, he let his voice be heard; for it was not a voice limited to fixed hours for teaching, nor was it accustomed to deliver itself in the manner common to the instruction of the school-room. He knew how to use every occasion so as to leave behind some word of life (Comp. Mark 6: 6, 34; Luke 5: 17; 8: 1).

Everywhere, now, where Jesus speaks, the essence of his teaching, as in the first sermon at Nazareth, can be regarded as a preaching of the kingdom of God, and a testifying of himself as the personal manifestation of this kingdom. He always connects his own with the preaching of John the Baptist. His first cry, too, is: "The kingdom of heaven draweth nigh." This is the Gospel, the good news which he brings: "The kingdom of God is at hand" (Matt. 4: 23; Luke 4: 43; 8: 1; 9: 11; 10: 9; 16: 16); and this is the purpose of his journeyings through the land, namely, to bring these glad tidings (Mark 1: 14). Wherefore his preaching was called "*evangelium*," or "good tidings" (Luke 20: 1); to the extent, however, that it is the revelation of the divine council, and of divine grace, it is called "the word of God" (Luke 5: 1), or simply "the Word" (Mark 2: 2). That which Jesus proclaimed as to the acceptable year of the Lord, viz., that it had already come, is the same as that which he elsewhere preached concerning the kingdom

of God. The kingdom of God, however, is the kingdom wherein the will and power of God every where and unconditionally rule; the kingdom wherein the design of divine love and wisdom has come to complete and full revelation; the kingdom wherein the creation is absorbed in the Word creating it; the kingdom of fulfillment, wherein the glory of the Lord has descended into a world of his creation, and has filled it and glorified it. However perverted the carnal Jewish representations of this kingdom may have been, this, at any rate, was founded on truth, that the kingdom of God in its highest and most real sense comprehends not only the different peoples of the human race, but also extends out over nature, over the entire creation; in fine, that it denotes a regeneration of all things (Matt. 19: 28). But this regeneration itself presupposes another regeneration, the regeneration of human personality, of the human heart and will. Just as nature stands in an inner relation to man, its head, and as the fall of man reacted in a ruinous manner upon nature, so, if the kingdom of God is to include the regeneration of nature, its rise must be preceded by the moral regeneration of man, by the transformation of his mind. While now, by his signs and miracles, Jesus literally prefigured this condition of perfection, he further has not suffered his words to fail in their work of renewing and regenerating the heart. It was a necessity, indeed, that in his

proclaiming the divine kingdom, in his developing its details, he should give little prominence to its splendor; all the more impressive, however, is the stress thus laid upon the moral conditions which were demanded in order to an entrance into the kingdom of God. If the kingdom of God is to be good news to the poor, balm to the broken-hearted, a ransom for the captive, sight for the blind and relief for the bruised, men must first feel themselves poor, broken, captive, blind and bruised. One must see through the complete vanity and uselessness of one's previous walk; he must have seen into the falsity of the course which he has hitherto pursued; he must come to see clearly that that which men have heretofore called righteousness is not true righteousness. Jesus, however, reveals the true righteousness which avails in the kingdom of God, the narrow way which leads to life; he plants the roots whence alone spring forth the wholesome sprouts of moral life, the roots of spiritual poverty, of self-denial and of a longing after salvation (Matt. 5: 7). If the essence of the kingdom of God and its righteousness be thus conceived of and understood, then its image may be drawn—how it presents itself on earth, its establishment, its development, the form it takes amid earthly relations, and its completion in the future (Matt. 13).

When Jesus spoke in parables of the nature, planting and development of the kingdom of

heaven, his disciples came to him at once and begged him to explain his parabolic language. Jesus replied to them (Matt. 13: 11): "To you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of heaven." Jesus calls the contents of his words mysteries, in like manner as the apostle designated himself and all servants of the Gospel "stewards of the mysteries of God" (1 Cor. 4: 1). And the Gospel of the kingdom of God is a mystery, indeed, because its idea could not originate in any human mind or reason. All that belongs to the establishment of this divine kingdom, the incarnation of the Son of God, his passion and resurrection, the constituting of the Church, the calling of the heathen, the still future creation of a new heaven and a new earth, these are deeds belonging to God, deeds which must first have been accomplished before they can be laid hold of and understood by the receptive faith of man. To what extent is it, nevertheless, given the disciples to know now the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven? In that they are disciples they stand in a special relation to the person of Jesus. They are disciples because of the fact that they, through divine enlightenment, have recognized the purely distinctive fact in the person of Jesus, namely, that he is the Christ, the Son of the living God (Matt. 16: 16 ff). This is the mystery of the kingdom of God, the *person* of Jesus who stood there before his disciples. In him in whom the Word,

through which all things were created, itself entered into the created world and became man, the kingdom of God, a glorified creation which is in perfect harmony with its Creator, appears prefigured in a personality.

But if that be true, then it follows that the contents of the preaching done by Jesus must not have been solely an exposition of the kingdom of God, of the nature and moral conditions of which it was necessary to treat, but it must have been also a testifying with respect to the person of Christ as a person in whom this kingdom was comprehended. Such, indeed, was the case in the very beginning at Nazareth. By the expression "in your ears are the words of this prophecy fulfilled," he directs the attention of his hearers to the words proceeding from his own mouth, the words ringing at this moment in their ears, and to his person, for which these words are a speaking witness. The observation forces itself upon one that Jesus gave particular attention to this rendering of testimony regarding himself as the Son of God while he sojourned in Jerusalem, but that when in Galilee his preaching was occupied more with truths respecting the kingdom of God. In Jerusalem, the center of the chosen people, the place of the temple and of Jehovah's presence, it was fitting that the preaching should be chiefly in regard to God's dwelling in the Only Begotten Son, in whom and through whom was to be pro-

duced the true temple, the presence of God in the midst of his glorified creation, the kingdom of God. But, now, this preaching in Jerusalem produced the same effect, only in an increased measure, which we have found that the preaching in the synagogue of Nazareth produced. In opposition to this testimony regarding himself the people of Jerusalem also put questions: "Is not this the carpenter's son? Is he not from Galilee? from Nazareth? Does he not belong to the laity?" (Jno. 7: 15). The same offence is taken here as there at the humble manner of his appearing; the same pride in the divine right of the people flashes forth from these questions; the same illusion is here which sees no self-contradiction in a carnal kingdom of God, a kingdom including no moral regeneration; and the same fury is here, a fury which finally leads the rulers of Jerusalem to seize upon Jesus and put him to death at the hour recognized by himself as the hour of the sacrifice ordained from eternity.

Jesus directed his words to three classes of hearers: the people, the rulers of the people, and his disciples. He longed to gather Israel about him as a hen gathers her brood under her wings. Avoiding a false intimacy (Jno. 2: 24), he still gives himself up wholly to the people; he desires to awaken in them (Matt. 23: 37) a remembrance of how it has been arranged that through them the kingdom of God shall spread to the nations of the

earth, and seeks to bring them to obedience to the one requirement under which alone the fulfillment of this promise is possible, namely, that they renounce their own life in order to the taking up into themselves of the life proceeding from the Father which has been revealed and made susceptible of impartation through the Son. For this reason he was compelled to add to the attractive words which he proclaimed among his people (Jno. 7:37; 12:44) other words that were severe and incisive. In his talks and conversations he not only had occasion at times to point out errors in reasoning and knowledge, but everywhere he points out the fact that the root of their immoral character was grounded in error (Jno. 6:44). If he stands before his own people eye to eye, as it were, he speaks to them sharply; if he speaks to them in the presence of others, in the presence of Samaritans and Gentiles, he accords them recognition and emphasizes the fact of Israel's being the chosen people of God (Jno. 4:22; Matt. 15:26). So soon as by deep probing he discovers the hardness of men's hearts and their unbelief, he no longer withholds his words of rebuke (Matt. 11:20). But he does not in that neglect or forget a single individual who may seem to him to be inclined to draw near unto him. To be sure, he, before whose eyes the inner heart lies open, gives him timely warning who asks to follow him without first considering what such following entails (Matt. 8:20).

But where he sees faith germinating he meets it with his help, indeed, anticipates it and sets free the words of confession still half bound to the heart and lip (Matt. 8: 7). With surprising rapidity, as if by a divine word of creation—for his words are spirit and life, and give life,—in a brief conversation, he changes the soul to faith in him, and gives it a knowledge of him (Jno. 4: 7 ff). Sharper than his words to the people are his words to their teachers and leaders. The swifter and more decidedly these turn against him and become intent upon hating and destroying him as an insurrectionist and a disturber of the chosen people, the more pointedly the whole base, yea, devilish ground of this hatred is exposed by him (Luke 9: 40 ff). And yet how gradually he pursues his course, even here, as if allowing respite; at first, though entering the soul of the enemy, he nevertheless protects it and seeks by word and deed to convince it (Matt. 9: 4), until finally, indeed, as a symbol of the last judgment, he can have nothing but “woe” for this soul because of its thorough wickedness and hypocrisy. A gradualness is to be noted, too, in his talks with his disciples. The mysteries regarding his life are revealed to them, not all at once, but gradually, the one after the other; with the skill of a wise instructor he connects the already known with that which is still unknown (John 16: 4). For example, in the announcement of his passion, which his disciples

grasped with such difficulty, he acts at the same time with candor and yet with wise reserve. His teaching directs itself to agitations in the souls of his hearers—of which they themselves are at times but half conscious,—or it is an answer to questions lying unasked in their hearts. The whole purpose of his instructing his disciples is to teach them faith, and to build them up in the faith; the goal towards which he strives and unto which he attains is the bringing about of the moment when they can say: “Now we no longer ask, now we know that thou hast come forth from God” (Jno. 16: 31). And how did Jesus speak? In considering this question we distinguish (a) the mind from which his words sprang forth, (b) the oratorical form of his words, and (c) the rhetorical form of his preaching. First, in regard to the mind from which the words of Jesus were sent forth; it is manifest that just as he, the Only Begotten, is full of grace and truth, so is it just this grace and truth from which his words proceed. In his words truth and deepest compassion unite (Mark 6: 34). They express the tenderest love; his severity he knows how to soften through kindly address (Luke 12: 4); his pleading promise precedes his warning word; his mien, his look is first to speak—not in love alone, to be sure, but also, when the case demands, in holy wrath (Mark 3: 5; 10: 21, 27; Luke 20: 17). The feeling which fills his heart shines through his words as light

through delicate veiling; in the union of majesty and simplicity which his words show forth, is reflected the mind of Him who dwells in the mount and in the sanctuary, and yet also in the broken and contrite heart. Just as his words reach up into the mysteries of the divine life, so are they also, on the other hand, clothed in all humility and simplicity. The mind of patient endurance, never tiring of repeating over and over the words of salvation, permeates all his speech. Since with him everything depends upon this salvation, he adapts to that end the oratorical structure of his preaching. With a straight course he hastens on to the chief point of all his speech. This chief point must be felt to be such by his hearers. Therefore he chooses such a manner as will at first create astonishment; he then seeks through this feeling of astonishment to awaken questions in the answers to which truth shall be separated from error (Luke 22: 68). With this he gives time for reflection; and he arouses and fastens attention through his question: "Have you understood all these things?" or through his exhortation to hearken; or, again, he applies his words directly to the heart of his hearers (Jno. 11: 26). Finally, as to the language in which Jesus clothes his thoughts, this is to be remarked, namely, that in the beginning it was thoroughly real and unveiled. Soon, however, and especially in the presence of the people, it took on the form

of parables ; for a parable is a probe with which to search for faith. For the dead and hardened mind a parable conceals the truth completely, while, on the other hand, to the soul which is receptive and athirst for the water of life it reveals the truth (Matt. 13: 3; 34: 35). But he does not confine his speech to completed parables. The imprint of the figurative and parabolic permeates all his utterances. One may say that it becomes his customary manner of speaking, so that the Evangelist Mark can truthfully affirm that he did not speak to the people except in parables (Mark 4: 21). Jesus here, forsooth, adopts a method of teaching already used before by the teachers of Israel ; a method which, under the name "*Hagada*," included everything figurative, emblematical or allegorical. But here, too, he transforms that which has descended from former times into something new. With him the figure is not an ornament, but is the full and immediate expression of the thing itself. He exercises such an art in language as renders it plastic, and reveals in his words traces of that creative power of organization inherent in that eternal word through which all things were made, and which in him became human. His words live. What the revising and collating reflection of rhetoric calls tropes and figures, grew up spontaneously and naturally out of the indwelling impulses of his soul (Luke 17: 26 ff). With him the greatest thoughts were

comprehended in the fewest words. Oriental figurativeness united in his language with Occidental clearness and precision. His words are entirely original and fresh; and yet, at the same time, they are entirely familiar and native. And in order that such language might remain in the hearts of the hearers he employed a paradoxical and sententious manner of expression, whereby it penetrated the soul as with spears and nails (Mark 9: 42 ff).

Thus, then, is explained the deep and strong impression which Jesus' words of instruction made upon his hearers. Among the people and his disciples he stood as one having power, and not as the scribes who delivered themselves of tiresome reflections, or of the gay embellishments of vain speech. If the greatest orator of antiquity, Demosthenes, be praised above everything else for the power whereby he swayed men to that for which he was pleading, still more is praise due Jesus, the fullness of whose power, the power resident in his divine nature, enabled him to speak forth words of eternal truth, words which lay hold of the heart of him who is in the truth and make it their own! Although his apostles dared only say, "Through the grace given me I speak" (Rom. 12: 2), he, the one Master (Matt. 23: 8-10), in the full consciousness of his divine authority, cries, "But I say to you" (Matt. 5: 28). What wonder that such words call forth surprise

and astonishment; that with respect to the revelation of divine holiness, beneath which was concealed the divine glory, the praise of his hearers resounds; that they gladly give ear to his words and extol the wisdom of his speech (Luke 4: 22, 32; 21: 38; Mark 11: 18; 12: 37; 6: 2; John 7: 15). But, naturally, the same words call forth the anger of his adversaries. They are a balsam which refreshens, and a sword which wounds. As is his person, so are his words a sign to be spoken against, a rock of offence, but also a rock of eternal foundation for faith. Mighty and blessed together is the new life working creatively in the receptive heart. Such is the character of Jesus' words, and, too, just because they are the words of the Only Begotten Son of God, full of grace and truth.

Thanks be to God who hath given us these words! For the man of faith they are an eternally flowing source of all life; for the servant of the church they are an eternal model for all his teaching and preaching.

EHRENFEUCHTER, *Göttingen*.

XI.

First Miracle of Jesus at Cana and His Miracles in General.

Second Sunday After Epiphany.

UPON the threshold of Jesus' public life stands the incident of his participation in the wedding feast at Cana, and the miracle which he there performed. Just prior to this he had been baptized by John in the Jordan, and tempted by Satan in the wilderness. Upon his baptism there had followed a revelation from heaven and his equipment with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit came down upon Jesus as a visible sign, and imparted to the soul of Jesus—which from his childhood had grown steadily in wisdom and in favor with God and with man—its anointing and consecration to the office of Savior; that is, Jesus at this time received that fullness and maturity of the Spirit which was essential for the carrying out of the work for which he was sent, and for his own baptizing with the Holy Spirit (John 1: 33). Immediately thereupon Jesus had proceeded into the wilderness, where he spent forty days in fasting and prayer, and where, at the end of this quiet self-preparation, arose that threefold temptation which had reference to the messianic work of

Jesus. After he had thus been equipped and approved for the fulfillment of his mission, Jesus returned to the Jordan to John, and now sets to work (concerning which John, of all the Evangelists, gives the most detailed account) to attach to himself certain men, to gather about him his first disciples. These are John, Andrew, Peter, Philip and Nathanael. That, too, was a quiet and intimate association, the Master with his first disciples, and his disciples with their Master. Jesus came with them to Galilee. At his second visit to Jerusalem (John 2: 13 ff), Jesus, in company with his disciples (2: 17; 3: 22), steps forth at once publicly into the midst of his people. In the meantime occurred the participation of himself and his disciples in the wedding at Cana. That was an intermediate step between the private intercourse of Jesus with his disciples, and his public appearance before the people in the company of his apostles. He no longer limits himself to private companionship with them alone; still, he does not yet stand in the midst of his people. He no longer moves in the narrow, private circle, and still he is not yet on the broad stage of public life. It is an intermediate circle, one composed of disciples and friends, of relatives and acquaintances, in which we meet with Jesus at Cana.

The story of the marriage at Cana marks, still further, a transition stage as respects the relation between Jesus and his mother. Before this event

the mother of Jesus appears, in reality, as the chief personage; for John, in reporting this wedding, says: "The mother of Jesus was there, and Jesus also, and his disciples, were bidden to the marriage." According to this, Jesus and his disciples are only of secondary importance. Indeed, the wording of the text leaves the impression that Jesus had not been invited for his own sake, but for the sake of pleasing his mother. How differently reads the account immediately subsequent to this event: "After this Jesus went down to Capernaum, he, and his mother, and his brethren, and his disciples." It is surely no mere accident that the Redeemer is here mentioned first of all, and that his mother and his brethren, as well as his disciples, appear, to a certain extent, as his followers. By this the relation between Jesus and his mother has been completely reversed; before, Jesus appeared as dependent upon his mother; afterwards, she herself appears dependent upon him. Between them lies the marriage at Cana, where we see this change of relationship taking place in that private colloquy between Mary and her Son which has always been so startling to the readers and expounders of this passage. With this we come nearer the heart of the story.

When they began to lack wine for the table, Mary turned to her Son with the words: "They have no more wine!" But Jesus answered her: "What have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not

yet come." How is this answer to be harmonized with the respect and gentleness which, according to our feeling, is due woman from man as the stronger individual? And how with the reverence and piety which a son owes his mother? This we must admit, first of all, that the Oriental way of speaking is not to be measured by the standard of Occidental and, perchance, romantic expression. We are also mindful of the fact that the name used in the address does not have in the original text a significance that is in any sense wounding, or even impolite. But notwithstanding these facts there appears still to be a shock remaining in the question itself; it expresses at least a certain astonishment, a remonstrance, indeed, a sort of reproof. And we can understand it only when we assume that by her remark in regard to the wine's failing she meant to give him a hint of what he ought to do, a suggestion which still presupposed and laid claim to a mother's authority over her son. Probably there lay at the bottom of Mary's words the wish that Jesus, in order to spare the family an embarrassment, might at once depart with his disciples; at least, the remark of Jesus that his hour had not yet come seems to point to some such thought. But Jesus was no longer a son at home; since his baptism and temptation he had to live for an independent calling, for his messianic work. And in this no advice or suggestion from without, however well-meant, not even a hint from his

mother, so long as it was purely human in thought, could be regulative for him. Therefore the appellation "woman" rather than "mother" was not without its purpose; not that anything unkind or disdainful was thereby expressed, but he takes this method of making known the relation in which he stands to Mary; of making known that in her seeking to influence him in what he shall or shall not do, in that she is not as a mother to him, but only as a woman, as one thinking human thoughts (Matt. 16: 23).

Mary grasped correctly her Son's answer. She could hardly have fully understood him; but as to one part she understood quite well, that he remanded her to certain bounds; and this she apparently accepted without a trace of irritability. She was content, as regarded her person, to assume another position relative to her Son, to stand no longer *over* him as his mother. For the rest, she felt that her wish in the interest of the betrothed and their families was not directly ignored. In harmony with this feeling she instructed the servants to do whatever Jesus might bid them. She thereby acknowledges his right to command, and takes care that his orders be given strict attention.

Jesus now bade the servants fill with water certain stone water-pots which were at hand and which were used in the traditional Jewish purifications, in the washing of feet and of hands, in the cleansing of vessels, etc. And the servants filled

all of them up to the brim. There were six large casks in all, holding two or three firkins apiece ; so that their collective contents was at least fifty or sixty gallons. And now he directs the servants to draw out from the contents of the casks and bear away a sample of it to the governor of the feast, that is, to that member of the company who, as friend of the family, and as one experienced in such things, occupied the chief seat at the table, and directed the meal. He tasted it, and as an expert discovered in the sample offered him such an excellent wine that he at once, without suspecting the circumstances, administered a rebuke to the bridegroom, as the host of the day, for having kept the good wine until the last, when it was customary for one to set forth the good wine first of all, and afterwards, when men had already gone too far with the good wine, to set forth that which was not so good. So the water with which the casks were filled was transformed into most excellent wine.

The evangelist closes the account with the words : "This beginning of his signs did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested his glory ; and his disciples believed upon him." We see that John places special value upon this miracle as the first out of the many wrought by the Redeemer. Two features of it are emphasized by him which appear again in the later miracles of Christ : (a) he reveals his glory thereby, (b) the deed awakened faith.

The latter feature points to the purpose, the former to the cause of the miracle.

With respect to the first feature the apostle gives a significant hint; all the miracles of Jesus are revelations of himself. The entire public life of Jesus, his teaching and his conduct, his work and his suffering, was a revelation of himself. But by no means are his miracles the least factor in this self-revelation of our Lord. They are a revelation of the inner glory of his person. And this glory is of a moral kind, it rests in his will, in the direction of his will, or habit of thought, and in the power of his will.

As regards this power of will it is to be said that not only what we commonly call power of will, an energetic self-mastery, operated in the miracles of Jesus, but also a power of will which extended out over the external world, a lordship over nature. Considered from this side the miracles of Jesus are a practical solution of the doubt which that poor father, who surely expressed the feeling of many souls, implied when he said: "If thou canst do anything, have compassion on us, and help us!" (Mark 9 : 22). There is not a single one of the miracles of Jesus which does not, in this respect, reveal the inner glory of Jesus, especially his lordship over nature, the power of his will over material things. This is seen to be true when the Redeemer heals the sick, renders the possessed sound and spiritually free, and awakens the dead ;

or when he bids the storm and the tossing waves of Gennesareth be still, and when he satisfies the hunger of thousands with a few loaves of bread; or when he here at Cana turns the water into wine. Therefore, the impression made by these deeds upon the eye-witnesses was of such kind that they praised God, "who hath given so great power to men!" (Matt. 9: 8). This power, however, rested upon moral unity with God, upon the full obedience of faith rendered the Father by the Son, by virtue of which even he, as the Son, rules and disposes at his will. Hence every miracle, inasmuch as it testifies of the will-power of Jesus, of his authority over the powers of the world, is a revelation of his glory, that is, of his inner unity with God.

But that is only one side. The other is that in the deeds which he did is revealed the manner in which Jesus directed his will, his mind; the completely disinterested, self-lost, compassionate, redemptive, helpful and beneficent fullness of his heart's love; in short, his "grace and truth." So it is with our story here. Jesus does not turn the water into wine at the beginning, so as to make of it, as it were, a wedding present to be offered the bridegroom along with his greetings upon his first arrival at the house; but only when a want has arisen, a certain need, at least a confusing and vexatious embarrassment, does Jesus lay hold. But when he does interpose he not only relieves the uttermost embarrassment, and supplies what is

needful, but he does beyond what could be asked or thought, and with rich fullness presents a remarkable and excellent gift. He hereby affords a splendid revelation of his helpful love, the love which "crowns with loving-kindness and tender mercies" (Psa. 103:4). In similar manner, through healing the sick Jesus revealed himself as the Savior of both soul and body; through the expulsion of demons, as the one redeeming from Satan's power; through raising the dead to life, as the one overcoming death, as the one having life in himself; and through the miraculous feeding of thousands, as the Bread of life. And not only did he reveal himself as such, but he *proved* that he was such. He never performed a miracle for his own private advantage; he would then have been at the disposal of the Tempter's will, whose demand that he should turn stones into bread for the satisfying of his own hunger he at once refused to grant. Much rather Christ manifested a mind full of grace and kindness, the redeeming and helpful love which animated him; and he rendered it obvious "through all kinds of miraculous deeds, as illustrative signs." And just as is his love, so also is the humility of Jesus' heart revealed in this deed. There is not one superfluous word; two very brief directions to the servants, and that is all. The servants did not know why they were doing what they did. No one suspected what was taking place. The miracle is performed without any one's

knowing anything about it. Only the result reveals what had taken place. So without any ostentation, in a manner quiet and non-assuming, Jesus accomplishes that which is great. Thus does he work who is "meek and lowly in heart" (Matt. 11: 29). And all his miracles are revelations of his humble heart, which is by no means the smallest element of his glory.

But the glory which was in him, the power of his will, his mind of compassionate, beneficent love and heartfelt humility, must be perceived and believed by men. That was the purpose of his miracles. They were to serve to awaken and strengthen faith in him. Another of the results of the miracle at Cana was, therefore, as the eyewitness John relates (2: 11), that "his disciples believed upon him." By that cannot be meant that this was the very beginning of their faith in Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah and Savior; for the persons concerning whom we hear it here said that "they believed upon him," were already "disciples" of the Lord. Already, and some days previous, Andrew, in the name of himself and a companion, had called out to his brother Simon: "We have found the Messiah!" (1: 42.) Philip had said to Nathanael: "We have found Him of whom Moses and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth!" (1: 46.) And Nathanael had made this confession in the presence of Jesus: "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of

Israel!" whereupon Jesus testified to him that he believed (1 : 59 f). Wherefore the expression used by John in this passage means to say only that the disciples were strengthened in their trustful, confiding and self-sacrificing attachment to Jesus. They had faith in him before they saw this first "sign" given by Jesus. They had come to Jesus after having been put on the alert for him, partly by John the Baptist, and partly by this and that bit of evidence. They had learned to know him personally, and had heard his words, and thereby they had been led to the conviction that he was the promised Savior and Messiah. They had not seen miracles at first, so that these were not the agents which led them to believe. Still less, they did not in the beginning demand to see a sign, and had not made this the condition upon whose fulfillment they would perhaps conclude to believe.

And just so all of Jesus' other miracles did not have as their sole and only object the creating—not to say compelling—of faith through astonishing events. They are intended, rather, only as helps for souls already susceptible, already touched, already near the kingdom of God. On the contrary, those who sought miracles from Jesus, or, at least, not being satisfied, demanded miracles of a certain class, were each time turned away by the Redeemer with the greatest vigor, yea, even with indignation (Luke 11 : 16 ff). At

another time, far from wishing to overcome unbelief by miracles, he wrought but few miracles just because of the people's unbelief (Matt. 13: 58). On the other hand, he most certainly did prophesy a most severe judgment upon those who had been eye-witnesses of many of his wonderful deeds and still did not repent (Matt. 11: 20 ff). For there is nothing more obvious, and, in fact, more rational than the opinion to which Nicodemus gave expression: "No one can do the signs which thou doest except God be with him" (John 3: 2). The disciples were altogether right when they formulated the conviction, which was based especially upon his miracles, that Jesus was a prophet, mighty in deed and word, before God and all the people (Luke 24: 19). And for us of a later generation, who know of Jesus' miracles only through the testimony of the apostles and evangelists, these deeds of the Lord are significant traits by which we recognize him as the Savior of the world, as the Only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

GOTTHARD LECHLAR, *Leipsic*.

XII.

The Transfiguration of Jesus.

August 6.

ON THE sixth day of August the Catholic Church is wont to celebrate the *Festival of the Transfiguration of Jesus Christ*. Within the last century the Protestant Church, at least that of Germany, transferred to the sixth Sunday after Epiphany those *pericopes* (Matt. 17: 1-9; 2 Pet. 1: 16-22) relating to this significant fact in the life of Jesus, and which in the Romish missal belong to the Sunday immediately preceding "*Reminiscere*."

The apostles, now, did not follow myths devised of men, but guided by the Holy Spirit rendered testimony in regard to what they themselves saw and heard. Upon such testimony as this rest also such of the writings of the New Testament as were not penned by the apostles themselves, but which are, nevertheless, to be looked upon as inspired. Therefore it becomes us with pious reverence to draw nearer this event, standing as it does on the border between earth and heaven, and with proper devotion collect such features of the occurrence as are accessible from the Gospel accounts in order that we may thereby freshen the memory, and

obtain a correct conception of the whole of this manifestation, and so arrive at an approximate understanding of its significance as respects the story of salvation.

The central figure in the historical painting which the Evangelists Matthew (17: 1-9) and Mark (9: 2-8) and Luke (9: 28-36) have together sketched for us is the Lord himself. He ascends a high mountain. Church tradition — which, however, does not extend back further than the fourth century — says this was Mount Tabor, which lies distant about two hours to the southeast of Nazareth. From the top of this high-towering mountain one looks on the one side towards Carmel and on the other towards Mounts Ebal and Gerizim. Thus tradition ingeniously gives expression, even through the locality, to that relation which Jesus transfigured sustained to Elias and Moses, and which, according to the Bible narrative, appeared so significant to the disciples. But tradition in its symbolizing lacks the historic basis to which the Bible story holds firm. Apart from the fact that at that time there probably were fortifications upon the top of Mount Tabor, it is to be noted that Jesus was still in the realm of Philip in commerce with the multitudes of peoples thronging about him (Matt. 17: 14), and did not until later (Mark 9: 30) leave the district of Gaulonitis for Galilee. Accordingly we find the Lord still in the region to the east of the Sea of Galilee in the vicinity of

Cæsarea Philippi at the foot of Anti-Lebanon. From here he made his ascent; probably, however, not up the spur of the mountain range called Mount Paneas, near the above-named city, but, since the mountain is mentioned explicitly as a high one, up snow-clad Hermon.

This time, however, he does not go alone, as at other times, when he withdrew from the press of a people seized by enthusiastic and party-colored messianic hopes (John 6 : 15), or when he, in order to nourish his moral-personal life-communion with the Father, went where he might be strictly alone, and bowed in prayer (Matt. 14 : 23). Jesus took some of his disciples with him; those three, forsooth, who frequently occupied a closer personal relation to him than the others—without their being separated from the rest of the twelve, however, in such manner as the latter or the seventy were separated from the people—that is, he took with him the two sons of Zebedee, the Sons of Thunder—James and John—and that Simon who bore the significant name Peter, who here, as almost everywhere, seems to be the mouthpiece of the disciples. They are the same three which Jesus took with him into closer relationship in Gethsemane at the time of his struggle there (Matt. 26 : 37). This observation gives us a clue which we must the more closely note according as the evangelists the more distinctly connect with an earlier event the experience of these three upon

the Mount of Transfiguration. Six days previous Jesus had demanded from them a confession which brought to light the difference between their faith and the messianic conceptions of the mass of the people (Matt. 16: 1-6). Peter had expressed his confession there in such a form as to show that the disciples had made great progress in the development of their faith-life, and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ since the day when they cried: "We have found the Messiah!" (Jno. 1: 41). The Lord himself had referred this confession to a revelation which had been made in the heart of the speaker, and, further, confirmed it through special blessings and promises as one wholesome, unalterable and fundamental for the whole body of believers. This progress in faith and confession having been made, the Lord immediately proceeds to guide his disciples into a deeper knowledge of their particular position and work with respect to the future establishment of the community or Church of God upon earth, and into an understanding of the course of his own life, especially of his coming rejection at Jerusalem. The body of disciples, however, did not yet understand that the Messiah could only complete his life and the work assigned him by the Father, namely, that of bringing the kingdom of God into the world, by going as a Redeemer through suffering to glory. They did not know what meaning to apply to the words "death" and "resurrection" when used with respect to the Son

of the Living God. The thought of God's King suffering when taken along with that of the separation from his disciples thereby entailed was so incomprehensible and so foreign to them that Peter was led to express himself in regard thereto in such a way as to call forth from the Lord the severest reprimand. So with a thorn in the heart, disturbed by questions which they could not master, possessed by a deep longing for a glimpse of the self-concealing riddle, and at the same time thrilled with presentiments of the self-revealing mysteries of God, the three most trusted disciples were taken by the Lord along with him up the mountain. Through the fact that Jesus thus purposely includes these disciples we are prepared to expect that something intended for their observation will occur on the mountain.

Yet this occurrence was not for the disciples alone. Later, indeed, Jesus lays special emphasis upon that side of this event by virtue of which it was a "vision" for the disciples (v. 9), and Luke, moreover, gives such an account of their condition as will not allow us to affirm that they were either wide awake or sound asleep. But it does not therefore follow that one must regard this event as an optical illusion, or a dream, or a mere vision on the part of the disciples in order, through these recognized subjective conditions, to render a natural explanation of the striking and wonderful form of the phenomenon here described. The

subsequent conversation of Jesus with his disciples excludes completely any such assumption; for the Lord gives them not only a partially corrective explanation, but directs them also not to tell anyone of what they had seen until after his resurrection. Here, manifestly, Jesus himself confirms the reality of that which took place before their eyes. So, too, the truthfulness and fidelity of the narrator are confirmed by the remark that the disciples, even after this great experience, and while they retained firmly in their souls the word of God which they had heard (Mark 9: 10), still questioned one another, as if in controversy, as to what could be meant by the resurrection from the dead. Similar, also, in its impression is the narration to the effect that upon their descent from the mountain the disciples asked Jesus how it was that the scribes affirmed that Elias must first come. The accounts link together as a chain, and oppose all such attempts at explanation as seek to transfer the proceedings upon the mountain from the realm of history to the uncertain realm of tradition and distorted tales; or such as do not blush to deduce the entire story at once from the self-conceit of the later church, and from purposes had in view by dogmatic authors. The condition of the disciples as here set forth can be fully accounted for psychologically. The experiences of the days just preceding, together with their night wanderings in the solitudes of the mountain,

had brought them into a state of physical exhaustion, a state, however, which was accompanied by great spiritual wakefulness, and which is very aptly styled a waking in the midst of sleep; a condition, it may be held, which is peculiarly adapted to the observation of such phenomena as reveal within the material world things which do not belong thereto. Moreover, the conduct of the disciples corresponds with that which is often told of such persons in the Scriptures as were accounted worthy of divine revelations, or who unexpectedly found themselves in the presence of heavenly beings. Peter, as is usual, begins at once to speak, but so confusedly and hastily that he is not conscious of the purpose or direction of what he says. He has only been moved to speak, and yields without knowing what he shall say (Mark 9: 6). And they are all filled with that fear which comes upon the souls of the dying because of the near approach of the divine, and they finally fall upon their faces, not to come to themselves again until Jesus touches them and speaks those words of consolation: "Stand up, and be ye not afraid!" The disciples had found themselves in a condition such as prophets had occasionally experienced when they beheld the glory of the Lord.

And what is it that the disciples beheld? At first a radiance upon the face and garments of the Lord; for, according to Mark, they were glistening

with light like fresh-blown snow, such as no fuller on earth could whiten. This radiance, however, does not come upon Jesus from without. For, according to Matthew, his raiment becomes white as the light, but his face shines as the sun; hence, with greater intensity than his raiment. Further, according to Luke, it came to pass that while he was praying, "the fashion of his countenance was changed, and his raiment *became* white and dazzling." There is something unusual and strange about it, which corresponds with the fact that after the resurrection of Jesus those beholding him did not at first recognize him (Matt. 27: 17; Mark 16: 12; Luke 24: 16, 37; John 20: 14; 21: 4). Hence, the disciples do not see Jesus surrounded somehow by a light foreign to his own being and essence, as occurs in a drama in a typical manner, or for the heightening of the effect. The transfiguration takes place in Jesus himself while he prays, and the light breaks forth from his person, whereby even his garments are made to glisten. This last points at once to the fact that the Evangelists are not speaking here of that transfiguration of the features which shows itself in the midst of reverent moods, in the midst of joyous emotions, of warm-hearted love and happiness, or, in general, in the times of the intensified sensations of life, and, therefore, also in the times of anticipation of future perfection and glory had by those dying in happiness. Matthew, however,

speaks explicitly of a transformation, not somehow of the outer appearance, but of the essential form of Jesus Christ as he stood before his disciples. Such a change of form (*metamorphosis*—transfiguration) the Apostle Paul (Rom. 12: 21), in a moral and religious sense, holds out as the task of all Christians; and in 2 Cor. 3: 18, in harmony with the analogy, it is treated as a change affecting the entire personality of believers, and that for eternity.

A ray of light helpful for the understanding of this event enters our soul when we reflect that Jesus, as the Son of God, divested himself of the form of God (Phil. 2: 4), but did not cease to be in the fullest sense a partaker of the divine nature, that he much rather bore, in himself, "the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 2: 9). We also obtain more light when we reflect, further, that the result of his departure to the Father was the transfiguration of the human nature, which he truly had assumed, into the complete form of the Godlike life, and its exaltation to a joint possession of the divine glory. Upon the basis of the real union of divine and human nature in the person of Jesus Christ, it could happen that even during his earth-life the Godlike form could forsake its form of servant and become manifest to such as had their eyes open for such manifestations. The light proceeding from the Lord is that radiant form of the revelation of the divine

majesty which sheds light upon the latter's inner completeness; and which, further, as being composed of the divine essence, is the inner conception of the glory of God, and mediates all revelation, recognition and adoration of God in the world.

Our story, therefore, contains no mere imitation and expansion of the transfiguration of Moses. For the shining of Moses' face (Ex. 34: 29; 2 Cor. 3: 7) was the result of his having stood in the presence of the glory of God when, accompanied by Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, he had gone up the mountain to receive the law. Moreover, upon his return to the people for the purpose of conducting his historic office, this brightness gradually disappeared, for the *cause* of the shining, the presence of the divine glory, had departed from him and returned into the heavens. With Jesus, however, the cause of this glistening was one belonging to his person, and it abode in him without interruption. Therefore, it was always operative there, though as to the forms of its manifestation it was variable, and was determined by the gradation in the process of the development of the God-man. The glory which he had with the Father before the foundations of the world were laid, Jesus, on the evening before his crucifixion, asks the Father to give back to him, accompanying the petition with the assurance that he had finished the work which had been given him to do, and

had glorified the Father upon the earth. The divine glory (*doxa*) was therefore present with him throughout his earth-life, and, indeed, was indispensable to the carrying out of his messianic office. In his works he had manifested it as a glory peculiarly his own (John 2: 11), and the disciples who believed upon him saw it as the glory of the Only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth (John 1: 14). But just as this glory, even after the return home of the Son of God to his exalted position at the right hand of God, remains one hidden in the Father until his coming again (Col. 3: 4), so, too, in his earth-life it was one veiled in the form of servitude, and had its various times and forms of revelation. In the full earnestness of the real, sinless and yet progressive development in the life of the God-man (Luke 2: 52; Gal. 4: 4; Heb. 5: 8), just as little can we think of a capricious as of a magical flashing up and dying down of this glorious light, like the play of lightning in a storm. Here, too, the connection of all the utterances and experiences of Jesus with his personal consciousness, must be held fast, and the fact recognized that this transformation had a deep significance, not alone for his disciples, but also for himself.

This view is at once confirmed by the remark that this change took place while he was praying. We may not doubt but that the contents of this prayer had reference to the sacrifice of his life,

which, inasmuch as his work in Galilee was drawing to a close, and he was already on his last journey to Jerusalem, was near at hand, and about which, on account of this early end of his life, he had recently spoken more distinctly than ever before. Such prayers, however, are effective in promoting the growth and the maturity of life in God.

With this thought comes the observation that after every yielding of Jesus to the will of the Father, after every declaration of his willingness to accept the office of Redeemer, there follows immediately a glorification, a declaration of the divine good pleasure, a confirmation from heaven which serves as the basis of a further development in the life of the Messiah in harmony with God's good pleasure, and of the establishment of his soul in the will of the Father which he has in a voluntary and loving obedience undertaken to do (Matt. 3: 17; 4: 11; Luke 22: 43; Jno. 12: 28).

With this accords completely the further course of our story. The disciples suddenly behold two men standing beside Jesus in the glow of the light, and in conversation with him. They are Moses, the mediator of the old covenant, the one bringing the Law, whose body after his death enjoyed the special protection of God (Deut. 34: 6; Josh. 4: 8; Jude 9), and Elias, the representative of the zealous priesthood, of whom it had been promised that he should go before the Messiah for

the purpose of establishing the rule of God among the people (Mal. 4: 45), and who without undergoing a natural death was borne aloft into the heavenly life of light (2 Kings 2: 11). These two persons, whom many commentators find mentioned again in John's revelation (11: 3), are speaking with Jesus, according to Luke, in regard to his "departure." We have in this a hint or sign sufficient for pointing to the mystery of the cross as the subject of the conversation, though the veil thrown round it is not completely lifted. We do not venture to say what message these persons already belonging to the other world brought from the beyond, nor what information they may have brought along with them. But we may assume that a conversation indulged in at such a time, in such a manner, and by such persons poured light, solace and confidence into all the souls participating therein.

Manifestly Peter received just such an impression. He sees before him the realization of the kingdom of God in its glory, the Messiah as King, and the representatives of law and prophecy in his immediate presence. The partition wall between Here and There seems to him to have fallen; the barriers of time have disappeared; the tabernacles of Moses and Elias may stand peacefully beside the tabernacle of Jesus; and Peter supposes that he and his friends are at once to experience the dwelling of God—no longer merely figuratively,

but really and truly—in the midst of the children of men. His spirit has lost sight of all that which the Scriptures represent as having first to take place before sin and death may be overcome and the saints be forever with the Lord. The things imparted by Jesus relative to the way of the Son of Man's perfection, he had not understood; the reproof he had received is forgotten; his own weakness is not felt; upon seeing the forms begin to betake themselves from Jesus he is carried away by the vision and expresses his desire to retain it forever, as well as his willingness to assist in bringing about this result. He says to Jesus: "Master, it is good that we are here; if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles, one for thee, one for Moses, and one for Elias." But, behold, while he yet is speaking a cloud overshadows the three persons. And as they enter into the cloud the three terrified disciples hear a voice out of the cloud saying: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him!"

In his appearing upon earth Jehovah veils himself in a cloud of light, and by this means, too, he indicated his presence in the appointed tent and in the Temple (Ex. 40: 34; 1 Kings 8: 10). It is the garment which he wears for himself (Psa. 104: 2), revealing himself as a light which does not permit the mortal an immediate approach (1 Tim. 6: 16), and thus conceals God himself even from those brought near him (Ex. 20: 21). The voice, how-

ever, explains the procedure and makes it a sign of the highest significance. It shows that a simple repetition of the incident at the baptism of Jesus in the Jordan is not taking place, but a parallel going still deeper. The richer is Jesus' experience with sorrow since his initiation into his messianic office, the greater his development into the perfect life along with this experience, the more thorough and complete is the intertwining of the relations of his double nature which subsist in the humiliation and exaltation of the Savior, and operate upon one another with reciprocal effect. The glorification upon the mount, which here appears as the result of his willing acceptance of the oncoming sorrow, after a most decided rejection of the strong temptation occasioned him by Peter, is for Jesus himself a divine confirmation of the fact that in this way he would really fulfill the will of God his Father. It also confirms the further fact that although he must accomplish the eternal purpose of the world's redemption by sacrificing his life upon the cross, still he would not be cut off from life and salvation, but rather through forsaking the world he should go to the Father and obtain the position due him in his heavenly kingdom. It is, accordingly, not a figurative presentation of light which takes place to enlighten the disciples regarding the work and destiny of Jesus, and especially regarding his relation to the kingdom of God; and it is also not an expression of

the self-conceit of the later church which found in its own Christian principles the point of union for the religious powers of the past. For the Lord himself, in his work of consecration to the forthcoming sorrow, it is a change to the heavenly society of the perfect for the purpose of refreshing him on his journey to the cross. Just for that reason, too, it is more than an apprehension and foretaste of future happiness, more than a pre-figuration of the coming glory. It is to be regarded as a temporary breaking away of the divine glory in reality belonging to the essence and being of the Lord Jesus Christ from the form of servitude in which it is veiled as a factor in the personal perfecting of his divine-human life being effected through the obedience of suffering. Hence, for the disciples, this event, by directing their attention to the person and work of Jesus, and by reminding them of the prophecy of Moses (Deut. 18: 15), affords a confirmation and development of their faith. They see how the old covenant is beginning to cross over into the new, and Jesus is shown to them from heaven to be the true Prophet who is to come into the world, and the Royal Priest who, exalted above all his enemies to the right hand of God, lives and reigns forever (Psa. 2: 6, 7; 40: 8; 110: 1, 4). With renewed obligation to faith in him they have to learn from him himself which is the royal road to be followed in the journey through life to the Father. C. B. MOLL, *Halle*.

XIII.

Public Entry of Jesus Into Jerusalem.

Palm Sunday.

WHEN, on this Sunday of Palms, the church bells begin to chime; when, after the long winter, we inhale again the fresh, warm breath of spring, and enter in upon the week of our children's consecration, and of the joyous "Hosanna;" when here in the northland the reviving meadows along the brooks in every vale, with their myriad blossoms, remind our awakened spirits of Jerusalem's palms; when having been thus aroused we reflect over the entry of Christ into the Holy City, where the enmity of the world slew and hanged him upon the cross, then an energy difficult to define in human words, but easily set at nought or frightened away, an energy of the Spirit from on high, quietly pervades the churches of Zion and carries with it most wondrous powers of prophecy and remembrance. Jesus Christ, thou Lord of lords and King of kings, hallow my lips that my mouth may herald thy praise and sing thee a worthy hosanna!

In a house in Bethany, upon the southeast slope of the Mount of Olives, upon whose opposite side lay Jerusalem, sat Jesus on the Sabbath at the

close of day, and with him Lazarus, whom a few weeks before he had awakened from the dead and called out of the tomb. Martha was serving, and Mary, the sister of Lazarus and Martha, was anointing Jesus' feet with costly ointment and drying them with the hairs of her head. Iscariot saw in this a waste, because he did not love his master Jesus, but money. "Let her alone," said Jesus, "she hath done what she could;" and then he explained that the anointing was for his forthcoming burial. To the dead man grants honors which he will not allow the living. The ointment may indeed have been a quantity left over from the supply procured for Lazarus, who was now alive. Eight days thereafter, Jesus, the one raising the dead to life, himself actually lay in the tomb.

On the following morning Jesus began to make ready to enter Jerusalem, and sent two of his disciples, Peter and John, to the neighboring farmhouse, Bethphage. "There," said he, "you will find an ass tied, and the foal of an ass; loose them and bring them to me. And if any man say aught unto you, ye shall say, 'The Lord hath need of them,' and straightway he will send them." That he knew without any one telling him, for in the Spirit he saw everything in advance, and was never surprised, because everything came about just as he had foreseen.

In the meantime Bethany had been thronged

with people who had come over to see Jesus, of whose arrival they had heard, and Lazarus, for the report of the latter's death and resurrection to life had been spread abroad. Although the lofty council had proclaimed a ban against every one who should follow Jesus, still this latest and greatest miraculous deed attracted many admirers, and among the more than two millions of the chosen Israelites who were pouring into the Holy City to the Passover feast, there were at least hundreds who desired to see the great Prophet, who were eager to get a glimpse of Him who did deeds unlike those of any other, and spoke such words as had never been heard before. This excited crowd surrounded Jesus, while his disciples spread their garments upon the colt which he afterwards mounted. That was a gladsome hour of joy and hope in the midst of a hopeless time when this Son of David, the one bringing salvation, crossed up and over the Mount of Olives. Those accompanying him, breaking off palm-branches from the trees, waved them before him and scattered them in his pathway. Some spread out their garments along his route that the feet of his beast might touch them. The Spirit of God gave the enraptured souls the proper words from the one hundred and eighteenth psalm, which, more than the people understood, gave expression to the entire significance of this hour. "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord!

Hosanna!" (Save Him!) rang out on the morning air, and this was repeated over and over again. Voices, too, were heard which greeted him as David's Son, as King. Jesus permitted all of this, for it was the truth, the core of his divine mission to which the multitude, with a correct impression, if not with sufficient understanding, gave expression. Here for once the voice of the people was an echo of the voice of God, and the time had come when the voice of God was thus to be heard through the mouth of the people. Then were fulfilled the words of God spoken through the prophet Zechariah: "*Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, thy King cometh unto thee: one righteous and having full salvation; lowly and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.*" His apostles themselves, however, did not know this as yet, but afterwards they perceived it.

Jesus, as David's Son, had to go the way of David to regal glory. David was chosen of God from a lowly estate and anointed by Samuel; from this time on he was the anointed of the Lord—which the name Christ signifies—but it was a long time before he was actually established in his kingdom. He had first, by his heroic deeds as signs of his worthiness, to win the confidence of Israel and suffer much at the hands of Saul, the king whom God had rejected. From the time when the people in praise of his victory over Goli-

ath cried, "Saul hath slain his thousands, but David his tens of thousands!" Saul became angry at him and sought opportunity to kill him. David, the anointed one, had to live in exile, and even after Saul's death he was for seven years king over Judah alone, although by the decree of God rule over the whole of Israel had been assigned him from the very beginning. In respect to Jesus, whose name signifies salvation, and who is the world's salvation, similar conditions were fulfilled, though in an infinitely greater measure. At the time of his conception, even, the angel Gabriel said to Mary: "*Thou shalt bring forth a Son whose name shall be called Jesus; he shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest, and God the Lord will give him the throne of his father David, and he shall be a King over the house of Judah forever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end.*" And at his baptism he received the witness of God: "*This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased;*" and the Holy Spirit came over him and remained upon him, so that he thus was anointed with the Holy Spirit, became Christ and the heir of the kingdom which should spread among all the peoples to bring them their salvation. But he did not as yet call himself King, nor even Christ, the heir of the future kingdom, although he was such. He must first, through deeds and signs such as no other had ever done, win the confidence of his people, and

even of the Gentiles also, and suffer many things from those princes of this world whom God had rejected. In raising Lazarus he had won a splendid victory from death, as from an arch Goliath. And now bursts forth the cry of hosanna—the people following him and those coming from Jerusalem to meet him hail him as their rightful King and Savior. But this, now, was just the sign which led the wicked Saul, the prince of this world and of death, to stir up against him all the envy and all the power of darkness, and, further, to seek to take from him forever his body, his life and his honor. His death upon the cross was determined upon, and he was to be thrust out of the world as a curse, just as David had been an exile. But He who is himself salvation turns cursing and death into elements of salvation, and the Crucified, after his ascension, was installed in his kingdom as the King, at first over a narrow circle, over certain ones chosen from the people of Israel, and afterwards over a larger number chosen from among the Gentiles. And his kingdom is one half-concealed in the form of the cross and of humility, and will continue to be such until all his enemies are put beneath the footstool of his feet. Finally, on the day of judgment, when all the dead have been awakened, and all hearts brought into the presence of his council, then will the King and his kingdom shine in their divine glory. This Jesus knew as he rode into

Jerusalem seated on the foal of an ass and received the greetings of the people. For this reason he did not this time forbid their hosannas, nor when, later, the children in the temple took up the shout, and he said to his enemies who were wanting to prevent it, "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hath the Lord ordained a power against his enemies;" nor again, a little while before, when he said, "If these should keep silent, then the very stones would cry out."

Through inborn divine knowledge Jesus from his childhood was conscious of the fact that he was the Son of God, the world's salvation and the heir of heaven; and he knew the way which he had to go, and which his body of regenerated beings would have to follow, namely, through the cross to glory. He therefore understood also the Scriptures, the history of David, and the entire old covenant, and knew to what extent it was not only history but also a type of the future, and that it often, under the names of other persons, typified that which was to be done to him and through him. This interpretation is quite a different thing from a mere exposition of what took place; but for him and for us it is the chief thing in order to our understanding the Scriptures and making them our guiding star for the future. Jesus, with a divinely certain selection—not mistaking in even the slightest particulars—through the power of the Holy Spirit, takes from the Scriptures that which

at any given decisive hour must be fulfilled in him, develops it into a more definite form than it possesses as it stands written, and then proclaims it to the world. But what he thus recognized as the will of the Father, that he sought unconditionally to do and suffer. By such obedience he himself prepared the way for his entry into Jerusalem, when he received praise as being the coming King of the chosen people. With him this event was very trifling in comparison with his future glory, but weighty as a type and as a mark of a significant turning point in his life as Savior. Therefore in the last rebuke which he had administered to the blind leaders of the people he had alluded to this royal reception as a token of the future when he said: "Behold, your house (the temple) shall be left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, ye shall see me no more until ye say "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.'"

Thus, then, the Lord of Glory riding on the foal of an ass, amid the joyful salutations of his disciples, and of a multitude of people who, though, did not properly understand what they were doing, journeyed in deep reflection on over the Mount of Olives until Jerusalem came into view. "And as he drew near, he looked down upon the city and wept over it, and said: *'If thou hadst known in this day, even thou, the things which belong unto peace! but now they are hid from thy eyes. For the days will come when thy enemies shall*

cast up a bank about thee, and compass thee round about, and keep thee in on every hand, and shall dash thee to the ground, and thy children with thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knowest not the time of thy visitation.'" And the other words which he spake on one of the following days attach themselves hereto: "*O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou which killest the prophets and stonest them who are sent unto thee: how oft would I have gathered thy children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and ye would not!*"

In close connection with the entry of Christ into Jerusalem the Evangelist John tells of another event which, considered superficially, was of far less importance than the former, but for us it is not a whit less weighty, and that because of the significance which Jesus found therein and which he still further heightened by his utterances regarding it. If the hosannas of the little company from Israel availed as a sign that his hour had come, and that he had prepared the way for the knowledge of his mission, then there was another sign which he met with at this same time, probably, indeed, even on the same day, which made known how that among the Greeks also an interest in him had already been aroused. John says: "There were certain Greeks among those who had come up to worship at the feast;" Greeks by birth, who had not gone over to the

Jews, but only in company with Israel were honoring the God of heaven and earth. These desired to see Jesus privately, and so they begged of one of his disciples that he bring about such an opportunity. This wish afforded occasion for those memorable words of Jesus: "*The hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified. Verily, verily I say unto you, Except a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.*" In the spreading of his name which had already begun, he saw accordingly the sign that he could no longer avoid death, as he had done heretofore. But he also saw that his death would be the condition and the means of the propagation of his life in new creatures, in a race of regenerate beings within the realm of the whole earth. And he said further: "*He that loveth his soul shall lose it; and he that hateth (hence, does not act in accord with its lusts and inclinations) his soul in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.*" And then he adds: "*If any man will serve me, let him follow me; and where I am there shall my servant be also: if any man serve me, him will my Father honor.*"

Scarcely had Jesus spoken these words when the shadow of death passed before him, and he cried: "*Now is my soul troubled.*" He fought a fight which later returned twice again, first at the last supper, where the betrayer had received from his hand the last morsel of bread, where sorrow did not cease until Judas Iscariot, full of

satanic rage, had arisen and left his presence in order to the completion of his dark work of betrayal; and then again in Gethsemane. Each one of these sorrowful moments ended soon in a glorious victory, and in the renewal of the firm determination to resolutely endure all which pertained to the honor of God. Upon this first struggle he said to himself: "*What shall I say? Father, save me from this hour? Why, no!*" That the Father saves at the right time is self-evident; this indeed he will show in the forthcoming resurrection. "*But for this cause came I unto this hour.*" Now it stands out clear before his soul, not for help through the grievous way of sorrow will he ask, but only that thereby the goal be reached, the Father's glory be revealed. "*Father, glorify thy name.*" That is his prayer. And now a wonderful thing takes place, though not for the first time, forsooth; an audible voice descends from the heavens, a voice which those hearing do not understand, neither know how to explain to themselves. Later investigators would like to explain how God could produce such a voice; Jesus, however, and his disciple John, treat this question as to the "how?" as one of no consequence, and give attention only to the "who?" and the "what?" The Father speaks to the Son and answers him: "*I have glorified my name (through thee), and will glorify it again (through thee, through thy obedience, and in thee through thy glorification).*" Thus

Jesus interprets his Father's answer to the listening people, who did not know whether they had heard the voice of thunder or the voice of an angel, and adds, "This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes." Those who thought they had heard thunder should know that for them the voice of God signified the thunder of the judgment which was to be completed through his atoning death. "*Now,*" said he further, "*is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out, and I, if I be lifted up from the earth (through the cross to heaven), will draw all men unto me.*" Through the cross Jesus becomes the Savior of the world, passes judgment upon the unrighteous sovereigns, the princes of the world, and lays the foundations of his kingdom in the hearts of men.

Now we understand the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, as Jesus himself understood it, in its relation to the great crisis towards which the first step was thereby taken. "Would he appear at the passover feast?" men had asked. "Hardly!" was the answer. For, three months before, at the Feast of the Dedication, attempts had been made to stone him upon his saying to them plainly that he was the Christ; raging men had sought to lay hold of him and imprison him upon his declaring to them and maintaining that he was the Son of God. He had, to be sure, ventured back to Bethany a few weeks ago, to raise Lazarus from the dead; but he had returned in haste to Peræa, into

the land beyond the Jordan, where he lived in seclusion with a few of his disciples. True enough, too, there were among the people many on his side, those who had seen his mighty deeds, had heard his glorious words, and were indebted to him for relief from their blindness, deafness and other hitherto incurable diseases; but they were for the most part poor humble people without power, without boldness, and without influence; and he himself, though always fearless, had never intimated that he would make use of his alliances, or even his wonderful power, for striking a great blow, or even for saving himself. But see there! He is coming, and for the first time is purposely celebrating a triumphal entry, is suffering a joyous crowd to greet him as one sent from God, as the long-promised Redeemer, as the Son of David, as the Anointed, as King! He permits, he defends this homage as appropriate to him. Now he must either boldly establish his kingdom, which he calls the kingdom of heaven, by the use of his wonderful power, or go down with infamy, die a lamentable death, and be forgotten.

But he comes to set at nought these alternatives. He comes to die, and through his death conquer; he comes to overcome through his righteousness the power of sin, and to vanquish, through his resurrection, death and the fear of death, and so establish the kingdom of God, the kingdom of truth and eternal life, in the midst of

a sin-burdened world, in order to the saving of the lost through faith in his name. With this firmly set before him he enters Jerusalem, and in advance celebrates—humbly yet with the certainty of victory—the glory which he is to receive from his redeemed ones in the regeneration, when all things have been made new. This is the signification for him of the palm-branches and the cries of hosanna. Now he comes, seated upon the foal of an ass, riding into the Holy City, a city grown into a Sodom, and even now on the eve of rejecting the last visitation of grace. Some day, therefore, he is coming again, and will ride on fleecy clouds; then he will renew heaven and earth, and make of them a sacred dwelling for God, an eternal Jerusalem into which nothing impure shall enter.

Upon this great day of palms the church of the faithful ought to equip itself with faith and hope, and by patience in good works, no matter what the cross, render him perfect praise.

Thy Zion strews Thee palm-trees,
Their broken banches green,
My soul Thee psalms would render,
Thee greet with joyous mien;
For Thee my heart shall quicken
With constant praise aglow,
To Thee be willing service,
The best I can or know.

Amen.

H. E. SCHMIEDER, *Wittenberg.*

XIV.

The Institution of the Lord's Supper.

Maundy Thursday.

THIS is the one day which did not, as others, end for our Lord in rest. It was not followed by that peaceful slumber, or undisturbed converse with the Father, whereby he generally refreshed and strengthened himself for his life work. What lay before him was not concealed from him. He knew that his passion, which would end on the morrow in his death on the cross, would begin in the oncoming night. Death did not meet him unexpected; he met it with a perfectly clear understanding of the result. From this we can derive an explanation for the wonderful pitch to which he was wrought up on the evening of this day, and of the fact that he did not grow weary of comforting his disciples in regard to the unexpected turn in affairs which was close at hand. Who does not feel with respect to the last words of Jesus to his disciples that they are words of farewell, and that they have for them, and himself as well, the greatest signification? For, when he arose from the meal which they had been partaking of together, and laid aside his garments in order to wash his disciples' feet and dry them

with the towel with which he was girt, what other could that be than a last attempt of the departing Master, in a manner never to be forgotten, to show his disciples, who still persisted in exalting themselves the one above the other, the beauty and necessity of humility? Without this quality, indeed, love, with which disciples of the Lord must show themselves acquainted, could not exist, and could not manifest itself in the noblest form, namely, as a love that serves; a love which, forgetting and sacrificing self, descends into the lowest depths. At the same time, however, the Lord also pointed out the necessity of an inner purification which he alone could effect, and which they dared not oppose if they would have a part with him.

Yet, with this Jesus had not done enough for himself, or for the necessity of his disciples. That great condescension at the feet-washing was intended only to open their hearts so as to afford them some light regarding that still greater one, viz., the condescension even to death upon the cross. Up to that time they had not been willing to accept the words of the Lord in regard to his suffering and death. Upon his first definite announcement of his coming death, Peter in consternation had answered the Lord: "Master, this shall never happen to thee." Nor was he alone in this feeling, for his words but voiced the feeling of all the other disciples regarding an announce-

ment which came into such dire conflict with all their expectations. The stronger grew their faith in their Master as the promised Christ and the Son of the living God, the more impossible became the thought that he should suffer and die. Once he had received them with the promise: "From henceforth ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man," and the promise was fulfilled before their eyes. They had seen how that one word from him was sufficient to call the dead to life. How could they fear that *He* would become subject to the power of death? One word from him seemed sufficient for casting down the enemies resolved upon his death, and it seemed to them that this means necessarily would have to be employed against those enemies before he could enter into that kingdom of his for which there had been promised an eternal existence. Thus the disciples, in their hopes and ideas respecting the future of Christ, found no place, no room for his death; and to the extent that we look upon death as the punishment for sin, and regard the Lord as the only begotten Son of God, his death, without a divine explanation, would appear to us, too, an inexplicable riddle; yea, more, a stumbling-block. There would seem to be only two possibilities conceivable: either he was the One who should come, and so would not die, or he would die, and so fail to be the Promised One.

So it seemed to the disciples when the Lord was already near the hour of his death.

At this time, in the last hours of his sojourn with them, occurred that deed of the Lord's which was of the highest significance, not only for that moment and those disciples, but also for all time and for all the church of the faithful, viz., the institution of the Lord's Supper.

There had been a supper, indeed, under the old covenant. It was a divine ordinance, having its origin in that time to which the people of God looked back as the part of their history which was most glorious and most hopeful; in the days in which the Lord, mindful of the great promises which he had made their fathers, with a strong hand redeemed his oppressed people from Egyptian bondage. In the night in which the angel of death passed throughout Egypt, each householder, in accord with God's command, had assembled his household for partaking of a holy meal, whilst the door of his house was marked with the blood of the lamb which was to be eaten at this meal. The angel which had been commanded to slay all the first-born of Egypt, passed over and spared every house marked thus with the blood of the lamb and within which the Passover, that is, the salvation through the Lord's passing over, was being celebrated. Those engaged in this celebration, however, were ready for departing, and with staff in hand awaited the order to march. That

was the night in which the Lord delivered his captive people.

For the people there began with this redemption an entirely new period, for at this time, and not before, they began to be the people of the Lord, the chosen people; and for this reason the Passover month was put down as the first of all months, and Passover night as an annually recurring festival, and this, too, with such strict obligation thereto that neglect in the celebration of this feast was to be punished by extirpation from the people of God. The Passover meal which had preceded that great redemption, and by whose celebration the people had prepared themselves for this great act of God, was to be repeated annually, and at the same time of the year; in the same night, indeed, in which the first meal was eaten, only with this difference, that the blood of the lamb was no longer to be sprinkled upon the posts and lintels of the door, but was to be poured out upon the place of common atonement, upon the altar of the Lord. With lights burning, girt for journeying and with staff in hand, thus were the people of the Lord year by year to keep the Passover and eat the flesh of the lamb whose blood was brought for the atonement of their souls to the holy place of atonement. It was without doubt a memorial meal, but that memorial meal rested upon the fact that the later tribes were receiving what the earlier had received, the

flesh of the lamb and atonement through the blood of the lamb. And was it not just as if the people, in their celebration of the old redemption, equipped themselves for a new and higher redemption; as if in their celebration of the Passover, in the night of the Passover in which the Lord once had led his people from a strange land, they looked forward to a new and complete redemption?

This was the night in which the Lord saw his disciples collected around him for the last time before his passion; and it was this celebration of Israel's redemption from which he arose to effect the world's redemption. The moment was the most solemn of which one could think. Nothing could render the old covenant more glorious than for the Lord, who had come down from heaven to give life to the earth, to celebrate this holy meal of the covenant in company with those disciples whom he had chosen from among those associated under this covenant to be the light of the world. But these self-same hours in which occurred the glorification of the old covenant were the last of its appointed time. The time had come in which the old was to give way to that new and higher covenant which was made, not for a single one of the nations, but for them all; and not merely for a certain time, but for all time. But as the period of the old covenant had begun with a great revelation of the Lord, with the redemption of his peo-

ple from a foreign power, and as the old covenant rested upon this redemption, so also it was not possible that the new covenant, the one made for all peoples and times, should, without a new glorification from God, enter into the work of a much higher redemption. It could rest only upon a new redemption which should extend far out beyond the first, in that it actually imparted that which the first only typified and promised; it could only rest upon the redemption from that dark power into which the race through sin had fallen.

The hour for this general and eternal redemption had come. The Redeemer was present; the messengers of the redemption were with him. For the last time he was celebrating with them the holy meal of the old covenant which bore within itself both memories of the first Passover in Egypt and the promise of a higher Passover. The times of promise and of longing expectation had run their course and the time of fulfillment set in.

Then occurred what the sacred Evangelists Matthew, Mark and Luke, and St. Paul thus describe: "Our Lord Jesus Christ, in the night in which he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and gave it to his disciples, and said: 'Take, eat; this is my body for you. This do in remembrance of me.' In like manner also he took the cup after supper, and

gave thanks, and gave it to them and said : ' This do, as oft as ye drink it, in memory of me.' ”

In the above manner the Lord, just before his departure, and in his celebration of the Passover of the old covenant, instituted the Passover meal of the new. The Passover offering of the old covenant was a chosen lamb; the offering of the new is the Lamb of God in the highest sense, Christ the Son of God, the Only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. The blood of the old covenant had typically an atoning power; it covered, symbolically, the sins of the people, so that the Lord in his striking terror into the world through his judgments might pass over and protect the habitations of those belonging to his faithful band. The blood of the new Passover offering is that blood which atones for the sins of the world, not symbolically, but in truth and reality. As certainly as the death of the Lord was to be expected, so certainly was it a sacrificial death; and as certain as his blood was to be poured out, so certain was it the blood of atonement for a world in need of atonement,—for the forgiveness of sins. The offering which the Son of God brought could not be one among many other such; it could aim at nothing less than accomplishing that which all the others brought from the beginning of the world had symbolized; it could only be the offering of all offerings, *the* offering in the highest sense, and in a wholly incomparable sense, the

offering which abolished all other offerings because it was the fulfillment, the truth of them all. But just as only through the first true offering true atonement of sins was accomplished, so was this offering, the blood of Christ, the basis upon which the new, all-embracing and eternal covenant of grace could rest. In this sense the Lord said: "This is my body which is given for you, and this cup is the new covenant in my blood, which was shed for you for the remission of your sins."

All the words which have proceeded from the mouth of the Lord have for us an imperishable worth; but there are no words which could be dearer to us than these. How much of them the disciples may have comprehended at that moment is uncertain; but since their fulfillment they have for the church of the Lord a very manifest and incomparable glory; for they serve us as evidence of the fact that the deepest humiliation of the Son of God included in itself his highest glorification, and that his death is our life.

The Lord, however, was not content thus, in so solemn a manner, to announce his death to his disciples and reveal its gracious signification. In his offering them the bread and the cup he instituted for his church a holy ordinance; and this is the meaning of his words: "This do in remembrance of me." For, that which occurred during that Passover night could not, as is readily seen, have been done in memory of him, since the Lord was there in their midst; it could only be, in a

prophetic sense, the Passover meal of the new covenant, only the institution of that meal which the church of the faithful was to celebrate after the offering had been brought and the blood of the new covenant shed.

The Passover meal of the new covenant, like that of the old, is a true sacrificial meal. The Israelite, in his eating the Passover lamb in the night of the Passover, appropriated to himself the sacrifice of the Passover, and received his portion in the blessing afforded by this sacrifice; and the Christian, in his receiving the body and blood of the Lord in the Lord's Supper, has the sacrifice of Golgotha appropriated to himself, and he receives the blessing which this sacrifice brings. On that first Passover night the posts of the house had to be marked with the blood of the lamb, and, within the house, the Passover lamb eaten in order to prevent the angel which slew all the first-born of Egypt from being an angel of death to the Israelites also. Just so must the church of the new covenant partake of the body and blood of the true Passover sacrifice in order through its strength to be preserved against the judgment of God. Contempt for the Passover of the old covenant would have brought death; contempt for that of the new covenant, in which the old was fulfilled, can still less entail anything other than death and corruption.

The Passover meal of the old covenant had its fixed time, it is true, but it belonged to the period

of incompleteness and of symbolic celebrations. In the time of fulfillment even this limitation has passed away. By the Lord's saying, "This do, as oft as you do it, in memory of me," he left it entirely to his faithful ones to say how often and when they should observe the Lord's Supper. The former Passover-meal might be eaten only on Passover night, since the sacrifice of the Passover could be offered only on that night; and this sacrifice had to be repeated on that same night year after year. The Passover meal of the new covenant, the Lord's Supper, can be observed at any time by the church of the new covenant; for the true Passover offering was made once for all and needs no repetition. Thus the whole time of the new covenant is a time of the true Passover feast; it is the fulfillment of the type which was contained in the old feast of the Passover. In this sense the apostle says (1 Cor. 5: 7, 8), "For our passover also hath been sacrificed, *even* Christ: wherefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." But even if the true Passover sacrifice has no need of repetition, still the doorway to the true Passover meal is open continuously, and always one may cry anew to those longing for this refreshment: "Come, for all things are ready!" And greater refreshment than this there is not.

It is, to be sure, a wonderful meal in which the Lord gives us to eat of his body given for us, and

to drink of his blood poured out for us; but not less wonderful and mysterious is the manifestation of the Son of God in the flesh and the humiliation of him who was the eternal image of God and the effulgence of his glory; a humiliation which brought him down to death, even the death upon the cross. The whole realm into which faith in the Son of God conducts us is one of wonder; and it is not to be doubted that he who gave himself as a sacrifice for us, and who poured out his blood in order to the forgiveness of our sins, can, if he so wills, beyond our ability to think, feed us upon his body and give us to drink of his blood. And that this is his will cannot be doubted, for we have his words therefor. And so we will allow nothing to hinder us in partaking of the Lord's Supper; but, as becomes disciples of the Lord, we will value his words more highly than all the wisdom of men, and trust to him to give us in the Lord's Supper what he has promised—his body given for us, and his blood poured out for us for the forgiveness of sin. Then we will experience the truth, "Whosoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood, abides in me and I in him." As the Living Father hath sent me, and I live for the Father's sake, so, accordingly, whoever eats of me will also live for my sake. "This is the bread which came down from heaven; not as your fathers ate manna and died, but whosoever eats of this bread shall live forever."

FRIEDRICH HEINRICH RANKE, *Ansbach.*
Now in Munich.

XV.

Jesus' Struggle in Gethsemane.

Maundy Thursday.

THE scene of the greatest struggle the world has ever known, as regards our temporal and eternal destiny, is Gethsemane.

On leaving Jerusalem by way of Stephen's Gate and crossing the Kedron, one comes upon a small plat of ground at the base of the western slope of the Mount of Olives which is inclosed with a hedge and planted with a few olive trees of great age. This, presumably, is the remains of an ancient manor, or small farm, and it bears, even yet, the name Gethsemane ("oil-press"). Into the seclusion of this garden Jesus was wont oftentimes to retire at nightfall in order to be alone with his Father (Luke 21: 37); here again, at other times, he collected his disciples about him, where they might be together undisturbed (John 18: 2); here once more, and for aye, the journey to Golgotha was to be carefully weighed, prayerfully awaited, its most external pains felt, suffered and spiritually endured beforehand, and then be made without resistance and without delay. It was on the evening immediately preceding the day of his death that Jesus betook himself thither for the

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last time. The washing of his disciples' feet, the celebration of the last Passover meal and the first observance of the Lord's Supper, had already taken place within plastered walls. Judas had left the circle of the disciples, the Great Hallelujah (the one hundred and thirteenth to the one hundred and eighteenth psalms, those memorial and prophetic songs of Israel) had been sung around this evening meal. After the question as to whether they had been in want after his first sending them out, Jesus had assured his disciples that this time they would need to make provision for the journey, and had given them forewarning of the world's hostile attitude by his inquiry in regard to swords. Their offer to accompany him unto death he had been compelled to reject, accompanying his refusal with a humiliating statement in regard to their proud and dejected hearts. Astonished, sad and filled with foreboding, the little company had listened to their Master's parting words, and, filled with the glorification which they shared with him, had followed him in his high-priest-like prayer—a holy statement of accounts to the Father, and a protective legacy for his disciples. And now they pass through the shadows of the night to the Garden of Gethsemane. Here Jesus separates his disciples. The greater number he leaves, as it were, waiting in the outer court: "Sit ye here, while I go yonder and pray"—words which resemble those of

Abraham when he left his retinue at the foot of Mt. Moriah in order to ascend the mountain and offer his sacrifice. Peter, James and John, who had previously offered in a special manner to share in the cup of pain and his baptism of sorrow, who had been granted the favor of being witnesses at the house of Jairus and upon the Mount of Transfiguration, and who, further, were later on to be pillars in the church, these he took with him into the garden, as into the holy place: "My soul is troubled, even unto death; abide here and watch with me." Nothing human was foreign to the Son of man; he desired to have near him hearts which beat faithfully and sympathetically: "Can you not watch with me for one hour?" But there is still greater need of his own fidelity in the midst of his greatest depression through pain in order that he may warn the wavering ones and keep them from falling—an event which the trials of the succeeding hours threaten: "Watch and pray, lest ye fall into temptation." For it is prayer, indeed, which affords the proper composure, grasp and presence of mind. That he may pray, the High Priest leaves his disciples, or rather tears himself from them, and goes about a stone's throw alone to the Holy of Holies; he casts himself upon his knee—the last time of this outer bowing on the part of our Lord of which we have any account;—he falls upon his face; he cries aloud, so that his disciples hear, "Abba, my

Father, if it is possible, may this cup pass from me; yet, not as I will, but as thou wilt." An angel from heaven appears and strengthens him with heavenly powers, and with a view of the harvest to be produced by the redemption. Another and hotter contest begins: the death sweat appears upon the brow of the praying wrestler, for here is more than Jacob, and more than Jacob's struggle. Blood-drops flow, and curdling fall to the earth: "My Father, if it is not possible that this cup pass from me except I drink it, then thy will be done." For the third time he finds his disciples sleeping, for the third time he hastens back to his Father and prays again the self-same words of his struggle, of his victory over his own will, of his submission, and of his exaltation.

What was it that made this hour so severe for our Lord? Is it possible to think of the Son of God undergoing such a struggle without denying his complete obedience and thorough moral greatness? Why is the contemplation of this contest so affecting and so full of worth for us?

From the beginning Jesus had clearly foreseen his death, though obscurely, and had pointed it out to his disciples. Those who had profaned the temple would in the end seize upon the most holy temple, the body of the Messiah; the Good Shepherd would in the end lay down his life for the sheep; the seed-corn could produce fruit only by its death in the earth. During his last journey to

Jerusalem the Savior told freely and without parable how that his messianic inheritance was insult, and to be spit upon, and to be crucified by the hands of his people and the heathen. The hostile feeling towards Jesus on the part of certain classes, and especially on the part of the leaders of the people, whose base thoughts had been unmasked and their ecclesiastical and political authority threatened, had begun to grow; the appearance of such a physician brings the disease at once to a crisis. Wonderful and contradictory enough, the plan to murder Jesus, which had been many times thwarted, and yet was still cherished, comes to maturity in the hearts of his opponents directly upon the raising of Lazarus. Judas accepts the thirty pieces of silver, not secretly and treacherously, but openly before all the people; Jesus, through Judas' betrayal, and in accord with the council of the eternal Father, is to die at the time of the Feast of the Passover. His resurrection then will confirm itself all the more certainly; all the more swiftly the news of the terrible deed of the crucifixion and the incontrovertible fact of the resurrection will be spread throughout Israel and all the earth by the mouths of the visitors at the feast. This sermon, or none, will arouse Israel! The King must abide in the midst of his people; he is destined also to find, instead of a throne, a cross, and to die. The disciples, through the death of their Master, shall become

free, and be filled with the Holy Spirit. But if the death of Jesus was already determined upon in the plan of the Father, in the love of the Son, and in the baseness of humanity; if Jesus had seen it beforehand and made previous announcement of the fact; if he goes to Gethsemane precisely in order that he may prayerfully consider and await approaching death—if all this be true, how then, as if there could be another possibility in regard to the holy necessity of this procedure, can a struggle enter, even for a moment?

The key to this riddle is the humanity of Jesus. God sent his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh (Rom. 8: 3). The Word became flesh, real flesh with a capability for suffering, and for dread of suffering, with the natural impulse—in itself justifiable and explicable—of a human soul towards independence, freedom, exemption from pain, and honor. "The flesh is weak." These words in Gethsemane apply as well to the Lord himself as to his disciples. "Not my will be done." This denying of his own natural will is only the continuance of a moral struggle which extended throughout his life, from that temptation of lust which met him in the wilderness in the beginning of his career, up to that one of dread in the garden, where the Prince of Darkness sought to turn aside the Righteous One from completing the course of redemption. The sinless One is to taste death, the wages of sin, is to receive death at the

hands of sinners, yea, at the hands of his own people. The Prince of Honor must endure profanation like a common criminal; worse still, he must be condemned as a false Messiah. He who is himself the Truth must shoulder pretence and bear disgrace, forsaken, finally, even by the God who sent him into the world. Deeper than the denial of any and all bodily well-being do such trials strike into the pure soul! Love must complete and seal its work of entering among and into human souls with its last step, with the unconditional surrender of self. "I will pray," says the Lord; but as to that which took place between the Father and the Son in that hour, and which was infinitely more arduous, and not to be told by human tongue, of that he is silent. But we know of it, and pray about it. The events of Gethsemane find their first explanation in the conscience of the sinner through the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah: "He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; chastisement was laid upon him."

"And thither now from early dawn,
Mankind in myriad streams has flown,
Its load of sin to cast upon
The Lamb who bleedeth there alone."

Does the recoil of the flesh in the presence of such a death-task astonish us? Would it not much rather have astonished us, even to the extent of our mistrusting the humanity of our Lord, if it had been otherwise? Doceticism (the error which

teaches that the body of Jesus was only an apparent one, and not real), even as much as the resignation of stoicism, takes away from this composure beneath the hand of death its warmth and its truth. "The fancy of a youthful Christianity," says Gess, "devised for itself a Jesus who was exalted above conflict; but human experience, through its own conflicts, perceives that a Jesus who was without conflicts was no real man, and no redeemer. The stronger the demand made upon the human nature of Jesus the harder it must have been for him to refuse his natural will; the more powerful his nature the more powerful his will, and the more powerful his will the more vigorous the conflict." The holy wrath displayed at the cleansing of the temple, the inner sighing on account of the hardness of the heart of the Pharisees who demanded a sign, his sighing at the time of his healing the one deaf and dumb, and his weeping and strong emotion at the grave of Lazarus and over Jerusalem, show how strong and active were the emotions in the soul of our Lord in the midst of perfect purity. The rapid change in his moods, at one moment enjoying exalted rest and happiness in his high-priest-like prayer, and immediately thereafter in Gethsemane given over to weeping and fear, is met with again at the time when certain Greeks, desirous of salvation, make inquiry after him, and he perceives that there is at hand not only the hour of his glo-

rification, but also the hour when the grain of corn must fall into the ground and die; when he prays in succession, "Now is my soul troubled." "Father, save me from this hour!" "Father, glorify thy name!" At the grave of his friend he feels the bitterness of death and loss almost simultaneously with the feeling of triumph arising from his inherent life-giving resurrection-power. At the supper both pain, on account of the betrayer, and joy at his nearness to his home, coursed close upon one another through his soul. But it has been shown, psychologically, that in all great sorrows the last moment of expectation, the moment immediately preceding the reality, is the one of greatest anxiety, and the one hardly to be endured. If previously he had trembled before the baptism of sorrow, if six days ago, upon his entry into Jerusalem, he had had to contend with sorrow, much more in Gethsemane, for there dread was most intense, there the bitter cup was pressed close and irremovably upon his lips, the cup which he dared not remove until after he had cried aloud, "It is finished!" "Not the suffering itself, but the determination of his inner self to endure the suffering, is the occasion of his passion and the nerve of his sacrifice." As he through his baptism in the Jordan designated immersion into his Father's will as his way and work, and at another time showed how that death would be his reward, and at still another repeatedly affirmed,

"I seek not to do mine own will, but the will of Him who sent me," as he rejected as a temptation from Satan the offer of one of his disciples to tread for him the thorny path to the cross, so now, since his great hour is at hand, he kneels before the Father in Gethsemane. Outwardly and inwardly submissive to Him, he still makes the Father's will his food; he sanctifies, consecrates and humbles himself beneath the eternal plan of redemption. As Mediator, he is being made perfect through obedience in order that he may on the morrow offer the perfect offering which he here is already inwardly preparing. Thus the moral deed of the second Adam in the Garden of Gethsemane atones for the misdeed of the first Adam in the Garden of Eden. In his humanity faithful, and in his humanity made perfect, he became the High Priest who maketh intercession for us. He became at the same time our Captain and Leader, the Firstling among a cloud of witnesses, and the Beginner and Finisher of our faith. His footsteps we must follow, and with patience we must run the race set before us, in the struggle against sin, resisting with the weapons of prayer even unto blood (Heb. 12: 1-4). Cannot those ungrateful ones watch with Him even an hour, with Him who has watched and wept for them? Love for love! "The flesh is weak." The Captain did not speak these words in order to excuse our indolence, but that he might sharpen our watchfulness. Yet he

comforts those despondent ones: "In the world ye have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world!"

The struggle in Gethsemane has taken away even the sting of death in its victory. The Spirit of the Lord was, and continued to be, willing; it had no lack of confidence in the Father's love, no doubt as to the blessed result, no neglect or hesitancy in rendering obedience. "Thus it behooved," says this contestant, now arisen a victor, as he contemplates the Scriptures, which he has come to fulfill even in Gethsemane and on Golgotha. "In the days of his flesh he offered up prayers and supplications, with strong cryings and tears, unto Him who was able to save him from death, and having been heard for his godly fear, though he was a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered." So reads Hebrews 5: 7-9, the sacred text for this sacred picture in Gethsemane. The power to endure the kiss of the betrayer, and with self-control, yea, even with dignity, to meet the officers; the majesty with which he protects his disciples; the prudence with which he restrains Peter's uncalled-for sword, and which he manifested in his answers and in his speech in every trial; the clearness and gentleness which, as always, so now in this night of terror and confusion in general, allowed him to distinguish the grade of guilt and susceptibility in his enemies, and give heed thereto through

speech or silence; the love by whose virtue he makes his own the sorrow of another, be it that of the daughters of Jerusalem, or that of his mother, or that of the thief; the childlike devotion even to the last, "Father, into thy hands I commend my Spirit,"—this all is the fruit of his watching and prayer, is the demonstration of spirit and power arising from the victory which followed the struggle in Gethsemane. Yet, where is there a saved sinner who must not be regarded as spoils from that battle? Victory, as well as obedience even unto death upon the cross, was determined upon in Gethsemane; and the thorny soil, trembling beneath the curse of sin, was atoned for by the tears and bloody sweat of Jesus.

In his translation of the New Testament, John A. Bengel says, with respect to the sacred scene which we have just considered: "Terrible cup! Reasonable fear! Undivided obedience! Mighty prayer! Prompt and speedy answer! Grant, Lord, that this all may be true in me! Amen!"

RUDOLPH KÖGEL, *Berlin*.

XVI.

The Crucifixion of Jesus.

Good Friday.

- I. The Condemnation to Death Upon the Cross.*
- II. The Leading Away to the Cross.*
- III. The Cross.*
- IV. The Seven Utterances Upon the Cross.*
- V. The Death Upon the Cross.*

I. THE CONDEMNATION TO DEATH UPON THE CROSS.

Humanly considered, it was but the die of fate which decided this death for our Redeemer. It is true the lofty council had decreed, "He is worthy of death;" and this it had a right to do, though it did not have the right to carry out the death sentence without first obtaining its ratification from the Roman provincial governor. The death sentence was pronounced upon him by the Sanhedrim as one blaspheming the name of God, because he had set himself up as the Son of God, as the Messiah (Matt. 26: 63). This is made the ground of complaint even before Pilate, as is shown by Luke (23: 2, 3). The complaint now assumes a twofold aspect, for it includes both a civil and a religious complaint. According to the former, he was a pretender to the crown, and an instigator of revolt among the people against the Roman emperor.

These complaints are recorded in Luke, and also in John 18: 30; for an "evil doer" is the same as a violator of the civil law—is a state's criminal (1 Pet. 2: 12, 14). Pilate now, as a civil judge, makes inquiry regarding the latter charge, but the answers as well as the appearance of Jesus assure him that he has only a case of religious fanaticism to deal with, that this One has been delivered over to him through the envy of the leaders of the people (Matt. 27: 18). Therefore he declares that he finds no guilt in Jesus. He higgles with his judicial conscience, wishes through flagellation partly to appease their wrath, and then set him at liberty. Upon seeing this, they present the religious side of the accusation. They had already decided that, according to their law, he was worthy of death (John 19: 7); for in their religious affairs they themselves had the privilege of passing sentence (Josephus' Antiquities 16: 2, 3; Jewish Wars 6: 6, 2; Acts 8: 14). This increased the fear present in the conscience of Pilate (John 19: 8), but reminded by Jesus of the guilt that would rest upon his own conscience if he should render an unjust death-sentence, this Roman is all the more inclined towards the release of Jesus. The Jews see that he wavers, and they return now to the political side of the accusation; the desire to release such an insurgent, they say, makes him an enemy of Cæsar. He who fears not God is under the curse of having to fear men. So

he gives Jesus over to the Jews for crucifixion (John 19: 16), not as if they themselves had any power whereby they could have determined upon or completed it, but, in the sense of Luke 23: 24, "he acceded to their request and pronounced the death sentence."

How fatal this return to the civil side of the accusation! Thereby it comes about that the chosen people deliver their Savior over to the Gentiles (Matt. 20: 18; John 18: 35; 19: 11). Thus, too, his punishment, as administered by the state, is not that appointed by the Jewish law for the religious transgression of blasphemy, *i. e.*, stoning, but the Cross! Their vacillation with respect to the ground of accusation was at the same time a vacillation with respect to the manner of Jesus' death. When they deliver him over as a criminal to Pilate, the latter, in scorn of them, declares that if they, relying upon the investigation before their own spiritual court, ask immediately for his death, they themselves ought to put him to death; but when they are compelled to confess that they do not possess the right to do so, they thereby bring it about that the death sentence is passed upon him as a state's criminal by this Roman. Whence John 18: 32.

Thus, then, it has been shown that here, too, just as in the dice-play of human councils and conclusions, the die was cast by the hand of fate; but there is a hand still higher to which even fate

is subject. Fate beneath the hand of divine ruling has fulfilled the type which Moses set up in the wilderness (John 3: 14), and made true that prophecy spoken by Christ in regard to himself and his disciples as being cross-bearers (Matt. 20: 19; 10: 38). He gave Christianity, instead of a stoned Redeemer, one exalted on the cross. What a contrast between the two modes of death! There prostration beneath a crude, rough power, here victory in the midst of prostration; there a countenance hid from all without by reason of the deadly stones which had been hurled, here beneath the thorn-crowned brow an open face with its conflicting expressions of sorrow and of majesty, of pain and of peace—a study which has inspired art's masters in all ages to emulous productions, and which has stamped indelibly upon the heart of the faithful the outlines of the Christ-image as the image of divinity in the form of a servant, of victory amid prostration. The crucifix, that wordless sermon, what repentance and solace it has continually preached in cells and upon altars, in bed-chambers and in the temple of nature, in the holiest moments of life!

II. THE LEADING AWAY TO THE CROSS.

After their scourging, as a Greek author relates, the instrument upon which criminals were to meet their death was borne to the place of execution by the condemned themselves. To this humiliating

requirement He, too, submits who—notwithstanding the fact that even in this deep abasement twelve legions of angels stood at his command (Matt. 26: 53),—“was obedient unto death, even to death on the cross.” Even upon this journey, at the time of his deepest draining of the cup of sorrow, a gleam of divine majesty must have overspread his countenance; for the women of Jerusalem, doubtless well accustomed to such a spectacle, pour forth tears, not over those who were companions in His sentence, but over Him. As to what thoughts occupied the soul of Jesus, may we not infer them from his cry: *“Weep not for me, ye daughters of Jerusalem, but weep for yourselves and your children. For, behold, the days are coming in which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the breasts that never gave suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us.”* (Luke 23: 28-31.) Just as this full consciousness of the greatness of Jerusalem’s guilt, which did not know the time even of this, its last visitation, presented itself before the soul of Jesus at the time of his last entry into Jerusalem, so now it fills his heart. It is tears of penitence, not tears of compassion, which Jesus desires. What a text for a Good-Friday sermon! Two curious legends have attached themselves to this part of the story—that of the Wandering Jew, and that of Veronica’s handker-

chief. Weary, Jesus, in the course of this journey, leaned against a certain door-post; the owner of the house, a Jewish shoemaker, drove him away; whereupon Jesus, gazing steadfastly upon him, said: "Here I shall stand and rest, but thou, from now on, shalt wander until the end of days." Veronica, on the other hand, offered him her handkerchief to wipe away the sweat; he accepted it, and then gave it back to her with the features of his glorious face outlined upon the cloth.

What the rugged, physical organism of his fellow-convicts endured, to this the strength of Jesus—exhausted through a night of waking, through the bloody scourging, and still more, through the deep pain of his soul—succumbed. The right had been granted the Roman soldiery to press the people into public service at will; so they impress Simon of Cyrene, who is coming in from labor in the fields. Since he is called the father of Rufus, and Rom. 16:13 speaks of a Christian by the name of Rufus, it is assumed that this Simon was one of the followers of Jesus.

III. THE CROSS.

The time of the passing of the sentence, according to John, was about six o'clock; that of the crucifixion, according to Mark, about three. Once it was a question how nine hours could intervene between the two transactions. This difficulty is

overcome by assuming that the first three evangelists, in accord with the Jewish mode of reckoning, count from the time of sunrise, so that the third hour of John would be nine o'clock in the morning; and by assuming further, that John, on the contrary, counted from midnight, in accord with the Roman method. Three hours might well intervene between the sentencing and the erection of the cross. Some time was taken up with scourging Jesus and the criminals to be crucified with him. An hour could pass in the journey from the judgment-seat to the place of execution; for, according to Josephus, the circumference of Jerusalem amounted to one hour and a half, and the judgment-seat was before the gate of the city.

The cross was an upright pole with a cross-beam near the top—often very near the top, so that the cross assumed the shape of the letter T. It had no board under the feet, as has been represented in pictures, but yet it did have a peg in the middle for holding the weight of the body. After the doomed One had been robbed of all his clothing (saving a loin cloth), which fell to the men carrying out the sentence, he was drawn up by means of ropes upon the cross, which had been previously set up, and fastened to it by two nails driven through each hand, and one through each foot. In reality, this sort of punishment was resorted to by the Romans only in the case of slaves and base criminals, such as highway robbers and

insurgents, and never in case the condemned was a Roman citizen. Being a Roman method of punishing criminals, it was introduced into the provinces and into Palestine, where it was unknown before. It was considered one of the most distressing forms of punishment, as Cicero himself affirms. The body rested on the peg, to be sure, but the wounds in the hands must have kept tearing, the delicate blood-vessels have been ruptured by the tension, and the blood have rushed to the head. The heat of midday, and the wind blowing upon the open wounds, must have added still more to the pain. Death came on slowly and amid terrible tortures; for generally those crucified lived over twelve hours, sometimes until the following day or evening, and, at times, even until the third day. Only after a gradual benumbing of muscles, veins and nerves, spreading ultimately to the inner parts, did the end come. After the decease the bodies remained hanging on the cross until their decomposition.

Accordingly, it was no ordinary death which the Redeemer died; not upon a bed of sickness breathed he out his life, but a bloody death was his; "he was obedient unto death, yea, even to the death upon the cross." He died the death of an evil doer, as a chief of evil doers; whence he was crucified in the midst between the other two. He, the guiltless one, became a curse, *i. e.*, was condemned, in order to ransom us from the curse,

i. e., from the judgment of condemnation (Gal. 3: 13). How it must have chilled his inmost being as he, into whose hands the Father had given all things, hung there between heaven and earth, naked, save the crown of thorns,—as he who had done no sin hung thus, condemned by his own people, a criminal on his right, a criminal on his left! And the chill of this moment he had experienced beforehand, when he said: “That which was written concerning me: ‘He was numbered among the transgressors’ (Luke 22: 37; Isa. 53: 12), this must be fulfilled in me.” But he knew that all this was but the fulfillment of the divine purposes of wisdom and compassion. The mouth of prophets had proclaimed it beforehand, and so he adds: “That which was written concerning me must have its fulfillment.” What the Spirit of God had foretold through the mouth of the prophets, has been incorporated also in the councils of God (Acts 4: 27, 28); and what God hath embodied in His councils, He has embodied as Lord of earth’s affairs, as the One whom the wicked with their works must serve, as well as the good with theirs. This accounts for the fact that in the history of the passion of our Lord, he is found making frequent reference to what is written. Of the fact that wickedness with its devices must fulfill the devices of holiness a proof even more definite is found within the history of the crucifixion, viz., in the superscription upon the

cross. In the three universal languages of the times the Roman ordered written over the Crucified not, "This is the so-called King of the Jews," but the Roman governor becomes a missionary, and proclaims to the whole world that he who hangs on the cross here is "The King of the Jews."

IV. THE SEVEN UTTERANCES UPON THE CROSS.

Inasmuch as the cross was not above the height of a man from the ground, the mother of Jesus, John, and other sympathizing friends could gather close about him, read in the face of the dying what was going on in his soul, and exchange words with him. The pang of the mother's heart, who was compelled for six hours to gaze upon the painful countenance of her Son, is portrayed in *stabat mater dolorosa*.

Seven utterances of the dying Redeemer have been recorded for us, three of which have reference to himself, and four to others. Each one of these bears the imprint of that greatness of soul which his words alone possess. The story of the evangelists is portrayed in them.

(1) "*Father, forgive them, they know not what they do.*" (Luke 23: 34.) That these were his first words, spoken immediately after he had been raised up upon the cross, appears from the present tense of the verb, "they know not what they do." He can not be thinking of the Roman soldiers, for

they are doing nothing beyond their duty. That even in the midst of his passion he measures with great calmness the degree of guilt which attaches to those oppressing him, is shown by the calm reply which he makes to the high priest's servant, whose zeal for his master had caused him to treat Jesus with great rudeness (Jno. 18: 23), and by his attributing less guilt to his Gentile judge than to his own people (Jno. 19: 11). The real authors of his death-sentence were the Jewish leaders; yet the deluded people took the guilt of their leaders upon themselves: "His blood be upon us and our children" (Matt. 27: 25). This petition for forgiveness accordingly must be for them. But are they such as know not what they do? This statement, indeed, is found also in 1 Cor. 2: 8; Acts 3: 15. That they had condemned him in the Sanhedrim on false testimony; that they had brought him to the Gentile judge with false accusations, this they knew; that they in the face of better knowledge had declared that his miracles were the work of Satan (Matt. 12: 25, 26); that according to verse 32 they were on the road to the sin which is unpardonable, Jesus himself had pointed out to them. They suppose that in him they have condemned a deceiver (Matt. 27: 63), a presumptuous fanatic, but that he is the "Prince of Life, the Lord of Glory," this they do not know. So, then, they suffered even as much as their conscious sin required, while the prayer of Jesus removes from them

the guilt incurred unconsciously. So little as the pronouncing of the well-earned judgment found in the nineteenth chapter of Luke upon those there who did not recognize even the last day of their visitation by the grace of God, did not hinder Jesus from shedding tears of compassion over those who were thus so deeply blinded, just so little is he hindered here by his sight into the awful depths of their conscious sin from asking for pardon for such of their sin as was still open to forgiveness. "Is not Ephraim my dear son, and my trusted child? Therefore my heart breaks for him, so that I must have mercy upon him." (Jer. 31: 20.)

(2) *His words to the thief* (Luke 23: 39) are regarded as his second utterance, since, as is supposed, the one on the left would not long have restrained the outburst of his coarse mind. What a spectacle comes here to view! The humbled thief, in his deepest disgrace, still manifests a consciousness of the fact that in Jesus' pierced hands lie the keys of Paradise! We see at Jesus' side the world's two hemispheres, that of the impenitent and that of the penitent. We are accustomed to call these two criminals by a name which signifies a robber who lies in wait ("schächer"). Our text calls them "street thieves," or, highwaymen—it is possible that the one to the right had been sentenced, like Barabbas, only on account of a murder which he had committed during an uproar (Luke 23: 19). Thus it could be that his misdeed

was only the result of an outburst of passion which had carried him away. By the ancients we are told—as may be observed in later times—how that the vilest and coarsest criminals while undergoing public punishment, were accustomed to break forth with calumnious words against authority, and against all who chanced to come near them. Such was true here of the one on the left. But what an incredible scene on the right! The two elements which we demand in conversion appear complete in this condemned one. “We suffer the just reward for our deeds;” this is the feeling which every punishment imposed by authority because of some transgression ought to awaken. There still lives in the people a consciousness that a divine arrangement is revealed in the laws of authority, and in its punishments; and woe to the magistracy which through lust for glory fails to nourish this consciousness, nay seeks, rather, to cover it up; for it will cut off the deepest root its authority has in the hearts of the people. To the view which is so difficult for many to accept, even among our “upright people,” viz., that punishment is but a just recompense, and that a divine order of retribution is revealed in the punishments imposed by authorities, to this view the criminal on the right has attained, and with that to the condition of soul in which absolution is not stupefying but life giving in its effect. Not for release from merited punishment, not for pardon from the

civil sentence—for the forgiveness of God he begs: “Lord, remember me when thou comest in thy kingdom.” And what is it now which in this self-same hour in which all the world has forsaken the crucified King of the Jews leads this criminal to faith in this self-same King? What causes him to see in the crown of thorns the diadem of a King? Is it probable that already ere this, in Pilate’s palace forsooth, he had been convinced that this condemned one had done “no evil?” And did his eye see in the blanching face of the man at his side the lineaments of a heavenly King? The cross of infamy now becomes a throne of majesty, whence the Crucified opens the gates of heaven to the penitent sinner, and dispenses light and happiness. “Lord,” says he, “remember me when thou comest in thy kingdom” (as it must be read, instead of “into” thy kingdom). He had hoped for a future when the King who had not been recognized as such would throw off his *incognito* and appear in his glory. Jesus points him to the present: “To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise,” *i. e.*, in a condition of joy and happiness (2 Cor. 12: 4). What a contrast between that which is visible to the human eye and that which is going on in the world hidden in the breasts of Jesus and this criminal! Without, the helpless and disgraced man with nail-pierced hands; within, the consciousness that life and death have been given into his hands! And he who has been rejected by

the high priests and his own people is now the heir of blissful joy in company with God and all the saints !

(3) *The expression of his will regarding his mother and John* (Jno. 19 : 26, 27). Inasmuch as the words of one's will are customarily one's last, so one might think that these words of Jesus were his last ; but upon comparison with the account given by Matthew we find that we must think of these words as having been spoken somewhat earlier. The scene here is an affecting one. Here, too, however, the evangelist, without the addition of the smallest word of his own, leaves the picture he portrays to make its own effect. The mother's gaze, heavy with sorrow, doubtless had rested without interruption upon the cross. He who a little later as God manages the treasures of a world beyond, now, as a man, provides for that temporal care which a mother-heart still needs. But dare we say only the temporal care ? It is supposed that the dying man meant to direct that disciple whom he loved to care for the food, clothing and shelter of his mother. It has been affirmed that this disciple was well-to-do—an affirmation based upon certain indications, such as the fact that he possessed a house of his own in Jerusalem—as is inferred from the closing words of verse 27—that his father had mercenaries in his service (Mark 1 : 27), and that he was acquainted with the high priest (Mark 18 : 15). But had not the dis-

ciples given up all their property upon their turning to follow Jesus? And should not the brothers and sisters of Jesus who had cared for his mother heretofore, and whom we find converted and associated with the apostles after Jesus' resurrection (Acts 1:14), have continued to assume this care? But, on the other hand, this maiden-like disciple was, of all others, the most capable of understanding through the Spirit this tender feminine soul and its needs; and this is why to him before all the rest is given this precious charge to the keeping of which, according to tradition's story, he devoted himself faithfully until the death of this chosen one in Israel. "Who is my mother? Who are my brethren? Whosoever doeth the will of my Father in heaven, the same is my mother, my sister and my brother"—he once had said; and upon the exclamation of a Jewish mother: "Blessed the womb which bare thee, and the breast which gave thee suck," he once had made reply: "Yea, rather, blessed are they which hear the word of God, and keep it." With him the fleshly bond was secondary to the spiritual; but still he did not look upon it as worthless, and by no means so here where the tenderest spiritual bond is connected therewith.

A rather long silence follows, lasting until the twelfth hour, during which the suffering steadily increases in its intensity. Lifeless nature now becomes the interpreter of his suffering. It is not an

eclipse of the sun which occurs, as is easily understood; for at the time of the full moon, the time of the Passover feast, this could not occur. But the atmosphere becomes murky, as it does with us just before an earthquake. And this last-named phenomenon takes place at the death of Jesus. It shakes the earth so violently that the veil of the temple, though fastened above and below, is rent in twain, and the earth continues to tremble for three hours, or until the third hour according to our reckoning. In the midst of this darkness the holy sufferer opens his mouth once more and the words of his fourth utterance follow.

(4) *The God-forsaken cry* (Matt. 27: 46). Jesus makes use of the first words of the twenty-second Psalm in expressing his lamentation. Enigmatical words these; words in which unbelief has found the confession of a lost cause, and the faith of the church a holy mystery. In these words the Wolfenbüttler fragmentists see an expression of Jesus' grief at not being able to carry out his political messianic endeavors; and even a Schleiermacher, of an earlier period, found therein only a complaint of the Lord at being torn from his work in the very bloom of his life. Ill-advised attempts at explanation have long ago been made by many church fathers. Athanasius represents that Christ spoke these words for a pretense, in order that he might deceive Satan. Ambrosius, not quailing before the charge of heresy, cries: "I am not

ashamed to confess what Christ himself did not fear to proclaim with a loud voice, viz., that a separation of divinity from the human body took place;" but that in him divinity and humanity were united inseparably into one personality, and into one divine-human self-consciousness, is the confession of the orthodox church. Irenæus, one of the church fathers, came nearer the truth when he said that the divinity of Christ was transferred to a condition of quiescence, such that it ceased to affect his human nature. Protestant and Catholic expositors alike are agreed that the expression can not be understood to denote an absence of the divine essence, but only an absence of the divine assistance. And of what else do the words speak in that Psalm of David, of God's anointed, who, though despised and persecuted of men, is afterwards glorified of God and recognized by his people as the royal ancestor of Jesus? We remember, forsooth, how the Lord in the days of his passion called attention to this prefiguring of his humiliation in other passages as well (Jno. 13: 18; Psa. 41: 10); how he even used the words of David when committing his soul into the hands of his Father (Psa. 31: 6). And if the Savior has David before his soul as the type of his humiliation, how can he not look upon him as the pattern of his exaltation also in that cry of victory found in Psalm 22: 26-31: "*The Lord hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted;*

neither hath he hid his face from him; but when he cried unto him he hath heard. . . . All the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before him. . . . They shall come and declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done this.'

Here the Lord, to express his feeling, makes use of only the beginning words. Now, the expression "God has forsaken me," is nothing more nor less than what the succeeding words express ("he is far from me with his help and support"): "I cry, but my help is far away" (Psa. 27, 38; Heb. 13: 6). This anxious "Why?" too, is not a question implying doubt as to his fate; twice he mentions this God as his God, who sits enthroned upon the praise-songs of his church. It is not really a question, this "Why?" but an exclamation which gives expression to the greatness of his abandonment (Psa. 10: 1; Ex. 32: 11, 12). As far as the reality surpasses the type, so far does the pain and abandonment on the part of God expressed in Jesus' lamentation surpass that of his type David. The solace of which the divine sufferer is bereft on the cross is not merely aid from without, but aid from within, the comfort afforded by the joy beaming from the face of his God. Joy is the fundamental determinant of his soul in all its life, the joy of which he will make his own to partake (Jno. 15: 11). Although peace still remains in his heart—which remains also in the heart of all the

faithful so long as they hold fast to the anchor which lies within the veil—although the inner sun, which throughout his life kept watch over the inner emotions of his soul, had not set, although in the greatness of his misery he confesses still to know that God is his God, yet that sun's kindly rays no longer illumine and give warmth to his troubled spirit. The dark cloud of his sorrow has cut off its genial potency. How often do we see the countenance of the dying Christian sufferer, though worn away and distorted by grief, still lit up by a beam of the soul's joy, like moonlight through a darksome cloud. The cloud, however, which cast its night of darkness about the soul of this sufferer was first of all that of his physical pain. As truly and as keenly as every other sufferer, yea, more than any other, he felt physical pain; felt it as truly as he felt hunger and thirst or exhaustion beneath the burden of the cross. For, if it be said: "We have not a high priest which cannot be touched with a feeling of our infirmities; but one that hath been in all points tempted like as *we are*, yet without sin," then these infirmities are the capabilities for suffering which he took upon himself upon his assuming our flesh and blood in its condition of weakness through sin. Suffering is prohibition, and since prohibitions do not belong to original human nature, the wish to ward off suffering is not a sinful one, but is justifiable, and becomes sinful only when we recognize

that the suffering is sent by the hand of God, and seek to avert it. But he could not be conscious of his condition of physical suffering without the thought of its author also entering his soul. We have seen how upon his journey to the cross the guilt of his people and their certain punishment lay as a burden upon his soul; this burden he had carried with him up upon the cross. As he in spirit looked back upon the treason of one of his disciples, and the denial by another; as he saw the foaming rage of some of those who stood beneath his cross, and the cold derision of others, what emotions must have swayed this loving, holy heart! But, further still, he is face to face with death. He, the Prince of Life, stands in the presence of death, which is the wages of sin, and which he took upon himself with the assumption of the flesh and blood of a fallen humanity. If all human life shudders at death, how much more he who had done no sin, and who solely on account of the loving fellowship into which he had entered with sinners must, along with them, taste of this effect of sin, of death! For, every effect of sin is but a recompense; and all recompense is an emanation from the wrath of God at sin, is the active reaction against sin and transgression. With his heart of love entering into the guilt of those whose flesh and blood he hath assumed, and into the effects of their sins, Jesus, too, thereby comes under the wrath of God. From the presence of

this wrath the happiness which he has through his communion with the Father recedes.

(5) *The call for refreshment* (John 19:28). When the end drew near he cried, "I thirst!" Many have sought to understand this as spoken with respect to a spiritual thirst for souls; but this outcry is plainly one of physical want. "I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine," he had said (Matt. 26:29). Since the Supper he had not quenched his thirst. The loss of blood, the fixed position on the cross, and the midday's sun had produced a keener thirst; the bitter drink mixed with stupefying spices which was customarily given the crucified, he had refused; he wished to drink the cup of sorrow while possessed of full self-consciousness. Now, however, "Jesus knowing that all things are now finished, that the Scripture might be accomplished, saith, 'I thirst'" (John 19:28). So, then, even this measure of sorrow had been determined by God, and, as such, must be fulfilled by Jesus; and not until after its fulfillment does he allow himself refreshment—an indication to the effect that this depth of suffering on the part of the Lord was necessary to his representing sinful humanity.

(6) *"It is finished"* (John 19:30). What is finished? Is it the measure of the task of sorrow of which we have just spoken, or is it the measure of the suffering of his earth-life? For his suffering did not begin with that last day of sorrow; he

suffered as long as he lived. As long as he lived, he loved; and as long as he loved, he, too, had to suffer—suffer the guilt of sin and whatsoever the world of sin brought to bear against him. Only occasionally does there break forth from him an expression of this feeling of suffering, as in the words, “O faithless and perverse generation, how long must I be with you!” (Mark 9: 19.) His whole earth-life was one of constant longing to return to his Father’s bosom, to the glory which he had with Him before the world was (John 17: 5). So, then, may it be that in these words there shall always be seen an expression of the heart freed from earth’s burden, of him who has suffered humiliation, but has now but one step before him to pass from the cross to a throne of glory.

(7) “*Father, into thy hands I commend my Spirit*” (Luke 23: 46). These are David’s words which Jesus employs in consigning his soul to his Father (Ps. 31: 6). The nobleness of his consciousness is expressed by these words in a three-fold manner. First, in that these last words are still an expression of that dependence of his life upon God through which his whole life was sustained. Then, in that his death appears not as a passive suffering, but as an active deed. Death is overcome even before he has endured it. Whence, finally, it is an expression of the fullest peace of soul; the sorrows and pains of earth now lie behind him.

V. THE DEATH ON THE CROSS.

“Then,” says Matthew, “the veil of the temple was rent in twain.” An account found in an old Jewish Christian Gospel informs us that the timbers to which the veil before the Holy of Holies was made fast had broken, and, as a consequence, the veil is now sundered, and that sanctuary which heretofore had been hidden from the profane eyes of all except the high priest, and from him save on the day of atonement, is revealed to all the people. From that time on, wherever the work of reconciliation has been fulfilled upon earth, there also the holy of holies of the religion of humanity has been opened up, and is no longer the privilege of a preferred class, but the common inheritance of the church of the faithful. Full of joyous confidence, the author of the Hebrew letter cries (10: 19): “*Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by the way which he dedicated for us, a new and living way, through the veil, that is, his flesh; and having a great high priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in the fullness of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.*”

According to the law of the Jews it was necessary for the condemned to be buried on the day of his execution—here all the more so, inasmuch as it was the day of preparation for the Sabbath

(John 19: 31, 42; Mark 14: 42). It was customary, in case they were taken down before their death, to break the bones of the crucified, not indeed for the purpose of completing their death, since the vital parts were not touched, but in order that no degree of suffering might be spared them. When the soldiers approached Jesus for the purpose of carrying out this inhuman regulation, they found him already dead. Inasmuch as in some cases the crucified lived even until the third day, as remarked above, the death of Jesus was unusually early, so early, indeed, as to call forth the astonishment of Pilate himself (Mark 15: 45). As in the case of his exhaustion beneath the burden of the cross, so here his early death is to be explained partly by the immensity of his suffering itself, and partly by his rather delicate organism. Although the Roman soldiers are convinced that he is dead, yet they pierce his side with their pointed lance in order to make his death both sure and certain. Examples found among the ancients and in the history of the martyrs show that the lance was used in completing the death of the crucified. The wound inflicted upon him is at least as wide as the breadth of the hand (John 20: 25). Blood and water flow forth—a manifestation which is susceptible of complete understanding, physiologically, for the little membranous sacs on the right and left lungs contain water, and upon death the amount of water increases. If the stroke was made with the right

hand at the left side, the left lung probably was the one pierced. It has been asked, what interest had John (19 : 35) in asserting this fact so solemnly, "And he that hath seen hath borne witness, and his witness is true; and he knoweth that he saith the truth, that ye also may believe?" But when the evangelist continues in verse 36, "For these things came to pass that the Scripture might be fulfilled, 'A bone of him shall not be broken;,' and again another Scripture saith, 'They shall look upon him whom they have pierced,'" it is not to be doubted that this emphatic testimony of his aims to show that Jesus escaped the customary bone-breaking, and so was thereby set forth as the antitype of the Passover, of the protecting paschal lamb, no bones of which were to be broken.

He became like us in all respects—not with the exception of death, but of sin. "*Since the children are sharers in flesh and blood, he also himself in like manner partook of the same; that through death he might bring to nought the power of death, that is, the devil; and might deliver them who through the power of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage*" (Heb. 2 : 14). Death is the wages of sin, and whoever is a man is acquainted with the dread of death. Therefore they are all subjects to the fear of death their whole life long who have not Christ and yet feel the weight of the law as the strength of sin; for they know that for them life cannot

continue after this life, but only the judgment of eternal death. Now Christ hath redeemed his people from death—not from the necessity of death, for we read, “Whosoever believeth on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live” (John 11: 25). But he hath abolished the curse incident to the transgression of the law, and thereby “brought life and immortality to light” (2 Tim. 1: 10). Death is swallowed up in victory, for it has now become the transition to a complete unfolding of the true life of the spirit which Christ has planted within us: “The water which I shall give him will become in him a well of water, springing up into life eternal” (John 4: 14). Here it is a small and invisible streamlet which the Lord has caused to spring forth in us through the Spirit which he has planted within us; there it shall unfold and become a mighty river. If he has robbed death of its power, and swallowed it up in victory, then he hath also robbed him of his power who held the key of death, him who “was a murderer from the beginning,” and through whom sin, and with sin death entered into the world (John 8: 44). Just as for the Prince of Light the cross became merely a stepping-stone to the throne of his glory, so, too, it becomes such for the many sons whom that One for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, is seeking through himself to lead on to glory (Heb. 2: 10).

A. THOLUCK, *Halle*.

XVII.

The Descent of Jesus Into the Realm of the Dead.

Between Good Friday and Easter Morning.

THE period in the life of Jesus when he was veiled from mortal view, the period when he lay in that tomb about which a sacred silence reigns, is one which invites believers to quiet contemplation. First of all they must in spirit draw near this tomb just as if it still concealed its mystery, and give themselves over to the same emotions which were felt at the time by his disciples. What stirred their souls at this time we may know from what preceded and from that which followed. For they were still in a condition such that the words of that prophecy which found its fulfillment in the deed of the soldiers became applicable to them, viz., "I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad" (Matt. 24: 31). Two of them had even given expression to this thought when they said, while he was standing unrecognized in their midst: "But we hoped that it was he who should redeem Israel" (Luke 24: 21). Their hopes, accordingly, had gone to the tomb. And to what a tomb! Whenever any of those who had been scattered abroad, his beloved dis-

ciples, or any of those saintly women go thither on that quiet Sabbath day, they find it closed and sealed by the Roman authority, and guarded by Roman soldiers.

After his going forth as the Prince of Life, however, this tomb assumed another character, just as did that day on which he went forth, though even in the Jewish calendar of feasts it was already a "great Sabbath" (Jno. 19: 31). That is also its Christian appellation, and its latest significance is found in the fact that it stands on the border-land between two ages and two worlds. This Sabbath points back to the first Sabbath of creation in which God rested from his works after he had called them all good. Hitherto, the Redeemer had found no place where he might rest his head, but here now at last he has found it. And that was true of him first which was afterwards to be true of those who should die in him (Rev. 14: 13), viz., he "rested from his labors and his works followed him." This work, moreover, points to the future, to another great Sabbath which has been prepared for his people, the rest which follows their wanderings as pilgrims and strangers upon earth, and which is likened to the rest which God enjoyed after he had ended his work of creation (Heb. 4: 9, 10).

The resting in the tomb turns upon the fact that the Lord laid down his life and took it up again (Jno. 10: 18), both of which events belonged still to

his earth life. Therefore the account of the same leads up to the question which has to do with his intervening state, with the life which he still had in death. The Gospel, forsooth, does not answer this question, for immediately after the account of his burial comes the announcement of his resurrection. But the first Confession of Faith of universal Christianity introduced as its second article "The Descent into Hell." It regarded this as one of the chief events in the life of our Lord, and classed it along with his birth, passion, death, resurrection and ascension into heaven. Wherefore, here where we are seeking through a series of life-pictures to reproduce for ourselves his person and work, even this death picture is not to be excluded.

But if we make the Apostles' Confession of Faith the foundation for this picture, we must note two limitations. In the first place, this confession, whose origin reaches back almost to the times of the apostles,—even if it did not originate with them—did not in the first centuries contain as yet the article regarding the descent into hell. Even in the fourth century, whence arises the information regarding this article, its acceptance was not universal, for it was not contained in the formula in use at Rome. It is not to be understood from this that it was a new doctrine at this time, for it had long been known and was widely taught. But the fact that it is wanting in the most ancient form of this confession goes to prove that it was

considered a more mysterious fact, and not of equal weight with the other well known ones derived from the Gospel itself for the laying of faith's foundation, or, in other words, for producing in the newly-baptized the inner conception of faith. On the other hand, in the fourth century, it was both denied and affirmed in an emphatic manner that this act, being related to the person of Christ, had its significance for faith in him. Of much more weight is the fact that the article does not express what it seems to say in our language: not the hell where the condemned are punished is spoken of, but Hades, or the unseen world, where the souls of the dead, both righteous and unrighteous, rendezvous—as was the universal understanding of this word among the fathers (Irenæus, Hippolytus, Gregory of Nyssa, Chrysostomus, Tertullian, Lactantius, Jerome). This latter is the signification which our word “hell” originally had. Therefore, in order to avoid any misunderstanding, we should translate it: “The descent into the unseen world,” or rather, “into the world of death.”

In this there is a double mystery: the condition of departed souls in general, then that of the soul of Christ in particular, and its relation to them in the interval between his death and resurrection. We will not presume to intrude into the mysteries of the spirit world. We may seek to approach them, so far as they have to do with the

facts of salvation, only when witnesses of the Lord, or the apostles guide us.

Though announced in enigmatical words, the Redeemer left neither his disciples nor the people with whom he has spoken in darkness with respect to the decisive events with which they stand face to face, viz., his death, his resurrection and his ascension into heaven. He declares these facts, the first and the last, when he says: "A little while and ye shall not see me (*i. e.*, when I am entombed), and again a little while and ye shall see me (*i. e.*, in spirit, when I have ascended), for I go to the Father." (Jno. 16:16.) But he also makes explanations, particularly with regard to his condition, and even as to the time when he shall be separated from them. At first he does this through his words regarding the grain of wheat which produces much fruit only in case it fall into the ground and die (Jno. 12: 24). But this parable has to do only with degrees or grades of activity; it only teaches that in death the lower disappear in order to make room for the higher, and contains no reference to the fate of the dead, least of all to the corruptible body of earth and its relation to the resurrection body—a relation of which the Apostle Paul is the first to make mention (1 Cor. 15: 36, 37). But there are two other passages which deal more directly with the intermediate state. One is that about the prophet Jonah, whose experience was typical of the Son of

man's being for three days in the heart of the earth (Matt. 12: 40), or the resting of his body in the tomb. On the other hand, we have another passage telling about the soul-life where, in response to the robber's request, "Lord, remember me when thou comest in thy kingdom," Jesus says: "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." (Luke 23: 43.) These are among the richest and most precious words uttered by the Redeemer, and yet they are full of mystery. There are two other occasions where he made promises to individuals, and where these promises are made in clear statements so that their contents are at once manifest. One of these occasions is when he lifts up him who, crippled and needy in body and soul, has come to him for help, and says, "Be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee." (Matt. 9: 2). The other is when he connects the future of those who are his with the future of himself: "Where I am, there shall my servants be also." (Jno. 12: 26; 17: 24). Then, if he promised this latter to the thief, he had accepted his repentance and faith, and rewarded him with the forgiveness of his sins; since, of course, he could not, as an evil doer, have entered the kingdom of God until he had been made righteous through the name of Jesus (1 Cor. 6: 9-11). That, then, is, from the side of the Lord, a performance belonging to his sphere as High-Priest, is a prophetic utterance; yea, more, is a sovereign act; for he could not in any other way

afford more definite testimony of his glory, of the fact that he, even in the midst of death, holds the power over death (Comp. Heb. 2: 14). But the situation in which he himself was to be placed and in which also the thief was to be with him, lies hidden. For although time and place are pointed out, we have no means of understanding them: "To-day," he says, "thou shalt be with me in paradise." This "to-day," does that mean the time before the going down of the sun? But, above all that, when the light of earth's day has vanished; when the supernatural flight of time has begun, how then will the days be reckoned? And if one understands "to-day" to refer to the time immediately subsequent to death, the place is none the less obscure, whose name recalls, forsooth, the well watered garden in which the first parents were placed, yet signifies nothing more than a place of happiness. Useful by way of comparison, however, is the picture in the parable which represents that the soul of Lazarus after his death was carried by angels to Abraham's bosom (Luke 16: 22); and one does not venture beyond bounds when one assumes that paradise and Abraham's bosom are kindred expressions.

If next we seek the instruction which the apostle gives on this subject, we will receive first of all an explanation concerning the origin of the expression, "descent into hell," in contrast with which stands the expression, "the ascension into heaven."

A two-fold grade lies in the former: first the descent from heaven to earth, as the Lord himself calls it: "No one has ascended into heaven but he that descended out of heaven, *even* the Son of man, which is in heaven" (Jno. 3: 13; comp. 6: 62); to which is to be added also the apostolic words: "He ascended, what is it but that he descended into the lower parts of the earth?" (Eph. 4: 9). These "lower parts" (it is not said "lowest") are the earth itself in contradistinction with heaven, which is above. But this "above" and this "beneath" are so used out of accommodation to appearances. Moreover, heaven is to be understood, not literally as a place, but figuratively; not the heaven of clouds and stars is meant, but the one mentioned in the beginning of the Lord's prayer. The second grade, or degree, is the descent into the realm of the dead; for, forsooth, the latter is represented as being in or under the earth, inasmuch as its inhabitants are spoken of as being under the earth in that passage where are named the three kingdoms within which every knee shall bow at the name of Jesus, whether in heaven, on earth, or under the earth (Phil. 4: 10). That is an idea which is very ancient both with the Jews and the heathen (found in Genesis and Homer); but its recognition is not its confirmation. It is not an article of faith if it was not an object of divine revelation and apostolic annunciation; and it was not, for nowhere in the Holy Scriptures is there any manifest attempt

at giving information in regard to the place of abode of departed souls. On the contrary, the foreign origin of that representation of the lower world as the realm of death becomes quite manifest in the epistles of the New Testament. For with respect to the conception of hell, that it was a part of the same, it seems to have been of Greek origin, as appears from the expression, "God spared not angels when they sinned, but cast them down to hell, and committed them to pits of darkness" (2 Pet. 2: 4). And the Jewish term for the kingdom of the dead beneath the earth (*Sheol*, in Greek *Hades*, first used by Jacob in his lament that through sorrow of heart he would go down to the grave, *i. e.*, *sheol*, Gen. 37: 35), is taken directly from the psalter, and used by Peter in his sermon on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2: 27).

The purpose of this speech was to explain to the Jews those phenomena of which they were that day witnesses, and to produce in them faith. Peter therefore sets forth this outpouring as the work of the glorified Jesus of Nazareth, whom they had put to death but God had raised up, exalted and given the place of honor at his right hand. That such things were to come to pass he proves by the prophets, that they have been fulfilled he proves by the testimony of those disciples who had been eye-witnesses of the resurrection of Jesus. The verification of the resurrection occupies the middle point of the proof. In this verifi-

cation the prophetic words of David are used: "Thou wilt not leave my soul in sheol (the kingdom of the dead), nor suffer thine holy one to see corruption." The apostle applies both of these negations to Jesus, whereby it is presupposed to be as well a fact that his body had lain in the grave as that his soul had been in the realm of the dead. Nothing more is designated by this, however, than death, by virtue of the separation of soul and body; death, too, in the manner common to all mortals, and, so far as the soul is concerned, in harmony with the Old Testament conception of death. With respect to his body, however, this difference is true, viz., that in death he is at once delivered from death, *i. e.*, from the corruption incident to death. Nothing more is contained in it, then, than is expressed by the words of the confession—"died and was buried." The additional words, "and descended into the realm of the dead," must therefore have an additional significance, else they would be superfluous. (Many, however, have understood them to refer simply to his death. Calvin, to be sure, did not, for he emphatically rejected any such explanation; but Beza, and various reformatory theologians who came after him, did.) What this additional significance is, is shown by the same Apostle Peter in the nineteenth and twentieth verses of the third chapter of his First Epistle.

It is contained in that section of his Epistle in

which Peter gives a twofold exhortation: First, that they be not surprised at the sorrows which overtake Christians; and second, that in their walk they keep a good conscience, in order thereby to cast shame upon the reviling Gentiles. This exhortation rests upon the person and work of Christ, upon his passion, death, resurrection, exaltation and judgment; an exhortation to suffer, without guilt, in accord with his great example (3: 18; 4: 1); an exhortation, further, to keep that good conscience which had sought and obtained salvation in baptism through the power of his resurrection (3: 16, 21), and to comfort themselves with the revelation of his glory (4: 13, 14). It is an exhortation, too, which plainly sets forth that such as continue to lead the life of the Gentiles must render an account to him as a judge (4: 5). Coming in between his words regarding the death of Jesus and those regarding his resurrection is a sentence or two about the flood, the waters of which serve as a type of baptism. Mention is made of it chiefly, though, that it may serve as an example for the present time, inasmuch as this flood was the judgment and destruction of a world of sin. For he says in regard to the present: "The end of all things is at hand, and the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God." (4: 7, 17.) Wherefore we have his repeated exhortation to suffer, not as evil doers suffer, but as Christ suffered, and thus, accordingly, hold fast

the deliverance through baptism, like the family of Noah in the ark, while the wicked world without wails under the just judgment of God. And here, now, comes in his testimony in regard to the work of Christ in the realm of the dead, for he says: "Being put to death in the flesh, but quickened in the Spirit; in which also he went and preached to the spirits in prison, which aforetime were disobedient, when the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared." He therefore preached to the spirits who, while in the flesh, were unwilling to submit to chastisement at the hands of God's Spirit (Gen. 6: 3); and that, too, in prison, which must be conceived of as some portion of the realm of the dead, a place of torment, the place into which the rich man in the parable came after his death. There Jesus makes his appearance; it is not said that he descended thither, but simply that "he went," as later, into heaven (vs. 19, 22). The time is stated definitely: it was not sometime in the days of Noah, but during the interval between his death and resurrection. He went, then, as a spirit, while his body lay in the tomb, for, indeed, even in death his spirit lived on, that spirit which in his latest breath he had committed into his Father's hands. And what was the contents of this preaching? Certainly no other contents can be meant than that which the preaching of Christ in general had had, and which

here is particularly pointed out as the essence of his work, viz., to lead men to God. He must, then, have preached salvation. Assuredly, his work there was not the rendering of the verdict of damnation. This is a transcendent fact. It is of itself full enough of significance, even if allowed to stand alone, so that the preaching of the gospel to the dead be not in any particular way connected with what Christ did.

Wherefore the two facts, Christ in the realm of the dead, and Christ gone away to the spirits in prison, make up the contents of his descent. Here, out of fidelity to the word of Scripture, we stop, and restrain ourselves from painting a picture of the proceedings, and, still more, from enlarging upon it, or, indeed, transforming it entirely. All this latter was done in the early church, and again in the church of later times, by the application of passages which do not belong here, and by deductions from the passage itself which do not follow. Such an one is that which represents John the Baptist as still fulfilling in the realm of the dead his earthly office as forerunner of the Lord. That is a possible thought, perhaps a natural supposition; but there is nothing of it in the Bible. On the other hand, if, as is done in many pictures of the descent into hell which have come down to us from the Greek church, we apply here to the gates of hell the description—found in the Old Testament—of the bursting of iron

doors and the breaking of iron bars, a picture of the deliverance from the misery of exile (Psa. 107: 16, in accord with Isa. 45: 2), we have a representation of this occurrence. Painters have this license, but the sacred history cannot make use of such freedom. Again, theologians have applied to the appearing of Christ in hell his words in regard to the stronger man who breaks through upon an armed man, overcomes him in his palace, strips him of his armor and robs him of his goods (Luke 11: 22). But the parable has reference solely to the driving out of evil spirits in his healing of the sick, and serves as a parry for the assertion that Christ is driving out devils through Beelzebub; it does not, indeed, have any application to the relation sustained by Christ to the devil, even in general, much less so in the time following the death of Christ. For not by power does he gain the victory over the tempter, but by evading him; and not with power does he take from him his spoils, but through persuasion, *i. e.*, through conversion. But the Lord finished his work upon the earth, and he did it completely—even that for which he had come, *viz.*, to destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3: 8). And this took place more especially at the time of his passion, to which he called attention in such a solemn way that we can see the mystery of redemption pass, as it were, before us: “Now is the judgment of this world, now shall the prince of this world

be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth (upon the cross), will draw all men unto me." (John 12: 31, 32.) And after he spake the word "finished" on the cross, there was nothing left which had not been finished. Ere this, in his recalling Lazarus to life, he had shown his power over death, so that he, after his voluntarily laying down his life, could enter the realm of the dead only as its victor and Lord. And his person, as well as his preaching, had there, as upon the earth, no other limits than those fixed by the degree of penitence or impenitence of those hearing him.

The impression and the result of his appearing among the departed spirits, and the spirits in prison, we will not presume to set forth when the apostle beholds it in silence. We will imitate, rather, the modesty shown by the Concordat (Art. 9), and by the Lutherans and Reformists in the religious conference at Leipsic in 1631. At this last named conference both parties recognized in the descent of the Lord into hell a difficult and important article of faith which was as little to be comprehended by human reason as the doctrine concerning the sitting on the right hand of God. They recognized and agreed that the entire Christ, both his divinity and his humanity, had entered hell. That statement, however, which follows upon this, that while there he overcame the devil and wrested from him all his power, a statement

which by its rather sprightly dramatic coloring reminds us of the gospel of Nicodemus, we may here pass by.

But this event, however much or little of it we may understand, is useful for doctrine on many sides. It is useful, first of all, for the preparation of a confession regarding the person of Christ; for it shows that he, retaining still the unity of his divine and human natures—which never have been divorced from one another—accordingly as the God-man, even after his laying aside his body, went with his soul into the realm of the dead and worked there. Wherefore the ancient church, in order to indemnify the doctrine of the completeness of the humanity of Jesus (against the notion that the divine nature in him took the place of his rational soul), laid special stress upon the fact of the descent into hell. This event is of no less weight in the understanding of his work and office—in the understanding of his coming to seek that which was lost, as well as in the comprehension of his receiving all power upon earth and in heaven (Luke 19: 10; Matt. 28: 18). It also gives a glimpse into the abyss of the mystery of divine foreordination and election, showing that for unbelievers who did not in this life find the way of salvation, a door may yet stand open beyond the grave. And it strengthens the faithful in their belief that no evil power can injure them, and that the gates of hell shall not prevail against the Church.

F. PIPER.

XVIII.

The Resurrection of Jesus.

*March 25, according to the Greeks; March 27, according to the Latins.**

"THE Lord has truly arisen!" This cry with which certain disciples greeted the two returning from Emmaus has echoed and re-echoed from that time on down into the nineteenth century. Nor has this message been confined to one place any more than to one period; for its joyous notes have been taken up and repeated over all the earth. These are the triumphal words which mark Easter as Victory's festal season. This is the confession by whose power the Church sprang into life and by whose power it still exists. "Witnesses of the Resurrection of Christ"—such the apostles with one accord called themselves, and without this faith there never would have been a Church of the Crucified. But when we say without this faith, we mean also without this fact; for the faith of the disciples rested throughout upon that fact which they in common had personally and undeniably experienced. It was a fact, the evidence

* Concerning these assumptions and their symbolical significance, see Piper in the *Evangelical Calendar* for 1853, in the *Introduction*, pp. 3 and 4; also in the article, "*The Calendars and Martyr-Lists of the Anglo-Saxons, and the Martyr-List and Computation of Herrad von Laudsperg*," pp. 17 and following.

of which was repeated, first to individuals, then to the Twelve, and finally to as many as five hundred at once. It has been said, and on the best of grounds, that it would be difficult to find in all the world's history an event better attested or more credible than the resurrection of Christ.

But, now, he who begins to compare more closely with one another the accounts of the Four Evangelists, is astonished at finding in the narrations so great a variety of differing statements which seem to defy all attempts at harmony. Matthew tells with respect to two women, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary (the mother of James), that they, while in the empty tomb, receive the Easter message from angel lips, and also the instruction for the disciples that they are to depart and meet with the Risen One in Galilee. Then Christ himself appears to these two, and the message is told them again, but this time by the Risen One himself. The eleven disciples now depart into Galilee, and there on a certain mountain stand face to face with the Lord and receive his commands. Of more than this single manifestation nothing is said; indeed, it does not seem that there could have been others, for how, then, could there have been some who still doubted? (Matt. 28: 17.)

Mark's account begins much the same as that of Matthew, only to the two Marys he adds also Salome. These three see the angel sitting in the tomb, and hasten away so terrified that they do

not venture to tell anyone about their experience. Mary Magdalene is the first to tell what she has seen, and that not until after Jesus has appeared to her. *

According to Mark, this manifestation was to Mary alone, and so not for the other women. To this is now added the manifestation of which Matthew is silent, viz., the one which was granted only to the two disciples who were walking in the country. We are further told, also, of the manifestation of the Lord in the midst of the Eleven as they sat at meat, an event which took place, as we of course must presume, at Jerusalem, and on Easter evening. The words of the Arisen One on this occasion (Mark 16:15) agree with his words as recorded by Matthew, where he tells of the manifestation upon the mountain in Galilee. Mark (v. 7) has made mention of the fact that the disciples were directed to go into Galilee, but in giving the words of Jesus regarding baptism he

* We use here without scruple or hesitancy the disputed section in Mark (16:9-20). True enough, by Tischendorf's discovery of the Sinaitic manuscript, another authority is added to the one already possessed in which this particular portion of Mark's Gospel is wanting. Moreover, manifold evidences make it certain that this also was even more the case with manuscripts of the fourth century. But it is just as certain that verse eight could not have been the conclusion to the original Gospel. Either the concluding part, 9-20, is, after all, genuine, and the difficulty with it is only that the last page of the book was lost in early times, or the original conclusion was lost and another author has sought to make good the loss. The addition, however, if any, was made in earliest times. In support of this there is much testimony which was already at hand, even in the second century, and no little evidence in its favor is found also in the internal character of this section, for it reveals a writer who was thoroughly in position to draw from the original fount while it still was flowing.

does not intimate, even by so much as a single syllable, that they were spoken in Galilee; it appears, rather, as if all else, including even the ascension (v. 19), occurred at once on that same evening, and, forsooth, in Jerusalem.

Luke leaves a similar impression upon us. According to him (14:10), it was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and others with them; hence at least five women, who went out to the tomb, found it empty, saw two angels standing within, and brought back the news, thereby causing Peter to go out in haste to the sepulchre. He tells nothing whatever about one or more of the women seeing Jesus himself. On the other hand, he speaks next of what the two disciples who were on their way to Emmaus experienced, touches upon the fact that Simon Peter also had seen the Lord (v. 34), adds to that the account of the manifestation in the midst of the Eleven on Easter evening, and then brings the story to a close as abrupt even as that of Mark, so that it appears that Jesus ascended at once on that same evening into heaven—only not from within Jerusalem, to be sure, but after having led the disciples out as far as Bethany (v. 50).

John's presentation of the matter has a tone peculiarly its own. He speaks only of Mary Magdalene. She has come to the tomb before it is yet day, and when she finds the stone rolled away, without waiting for further investigation she

hastens in very great consternation back to Peter and John with the alarming message: "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb!" Hereupon these two come and examine the tomb, and then return home. Mary comes out again to the tomb and sees sitting there in it two angels, and immediately thereupon she sees Jesus himself—whom she at first mistakes for the gardener—and then bears the news to the assembled disciples. In the evening Jesus appears to them with the salutation "Peace!" Thomas is the only one absent; therefore, eight days later, the Lord reveals himself again in order to lead this one to believe. After this, he reveals himself for the third time to a number of his disciples at the Sea of Tiberias in Galilee (John 21:14). *

If now, in addition to these, we compare also the Apostle Paul's account of the manifestations of our Risen Lord, we shall find that Cephas, that is, Peter, saw him, then the Twelve, then more than five hundred brethren at once—of which no evangelist makes mention, then James—concerning which the evangelists again are silent, then the apostles in a body, and last of all Paul himself, who was at this time still persecuting the Church (1 Cor. 15:4-9).

Such is the diversity of the various accounts. Moreover, not only are they diverse, but, as it

* The hypothesis adopted by many commentators, that chapter twenty-one of John's Gospel was added in later times, is groundless. Compare, on the other hand, *Weitzel* in his "*Studies and Criticisms*." 1849. III.

seems, directly contradictory; especially when Matthew speaks of no other manifestation than that in Galilee, while Luke, on the other hand, seems to expressly exclude any such manifestation. Jesus already, on the night before his passion, had promised them that he would go before them into Galilee (Matt. 26: 32); now the angel repeats this promise, as also Jesus, when he reveals himself to the women (Matt. 28: 7, 10). While now, however, he here directs that the disciples proceed into Galilee, as if there was nothing to await in Jerusalem, from Luke's account (24: 39), he appears, on the contrary, to warn them very distinctly against any such procedure. His words, "Abide in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high," appear to have been spoken to them straightway on Easter evening.

Can this discord be harmonized? If so, how? The attempt has been made by assuming that "by the mountain in Galilee," of which Matthew speaks, is meant the northern peak of the Mount of Olives.* But this assumption rests on data altogether too recent and unreliable; and, besides, it leaves no room for the manifestation on the Sea of Tiberias. We are compelled, therefore, to seek some other solution.

In the first place the weighty testimony of the Apostle Paul forces upon us the conviction that the manifestations of Jesus could not all have

* *Rud. Hoffman*, "Concerning the Mountain of Galilee."

occurred within the limits of a single day ; so that although from Mark and Luke such would appear to be the case, it is only apparently so. Moreover, Luke himself confirms this latter opinion ; for we read in Acts (1 : 3) that he who had risen appeared repeatedly to his disciples throughout a period of forty days, and, further, that it was at the time of his taking leave of them that he gave them the command not to depart from Jerusalem, so that it is therefore a parting injunction. Furthermore, if they did not receive this command from the Lord until the day of his ascension, they could easily enough have made the excursion to the Sea of Tiberias and the Galilean mountain, and still have returned before that closing scene.

In this manner the author shows us how to rightly understand his former indefinite statement. That is to say, he, in his account of Easter, just as Mark, has comprehended in a brief summary the manifestations of the Risen One in their order, and the chief contents of his speeches. This but corresponds with the wonderful character of each day as its hours sped by unnoticed by the disciples—for they already half lived in eternity—because all the manifestations, this repeated appearing and disappearing, seemed like one continued leave-taking ; each single one thus made an impression as if it were the last. But if, in the manner Luke himself has instructed us to do, we separate the course of events into its individual parts, then the

command given later to abide in Jerusalem no longer stands in our way.

And when we take into consideration the peculiarity of Matthew, he offers just as little hindrance to our regarding the manifestation of Jesus in Jerusalem as prior to that in Galilee. With gigantic strides Matthew leads the fundamental truths of his Gospel through to the end. He nowhere aims at fullness as to particulars; precision in external features is not his goal. That Jesus is of Abraham's seed, is the Son of David and the promised messianic King, is the chief burden of his entire Gospel. Matthew alone tells how the leaders of the carnal Jews in Jerusalem sought by bribing the guards to suppress the news of his resurrection. As an offset to this baseness of the enemy he shows how the Risen One in Galilee appoints the eleven to be the chief ones in the new assembly, the church. The manifestation upon the mount, where the Lord speaks in the grandest of terms with respect to the power given him, and where he bestows upon his messengers the command, power and promise for the establishment of his kingdom, forms a very appropriate close for this Gospel. That it was the only one, Matthew does not at all assert; but, rather, inasmuch as he says, "They went unto the mountain where Jesus had appointed them" (Matt. 28:16), and yet has said nothing further about this appointment,

he himself leaves an impression that other events had intervened.

The manifestation of the Lord to more than five hundred brethren at once (1 Cor. 15:6), of whom many were still alive at the time of Paul's writing, was in all probability one and the same as the very significant manifestation upon the mount. At least, it is easier to understand how Matthew would say nothing about the great number of believers only because he was limiting himself to the chief personages in the church than it is to believe that the manifestation before the five hundred escaped the notice of all the evangelists. Furthermore, the mountain befits a large concourse, and Galilee, where the most of the Lord's followers were, a number greater than five hundred; for at Jerusalem only one hundred and twenty were present at the time of his ascension (Acts 1:15). Finally, we have to seek in a wider circle than that constituted by the eleven for those on the mountain in Galilee who still were in doubt (Matt. 28:17).

In this manner the chief discords in the various accounts of Easter are harmonized without violence. Indeed, by closer inspection we perceive that that chief and highly important assemblage in Galilee could not have taken place had not the Lord in his grace done more for his disciples than he at first led them to expect. We see, indeed, how far they were from being ready to follow out

the instruction which directed them to go into Galilee. When the women made known to them the Easter message, they doubted their words, for they sounded to them like idle tales (Luke 24:11). When Mary declared to them that she had seen the Lord himself, they did not believe her (Mark 16:12). When the disciples returning from Emmaus make known their glad message, it is said, to be sure, "The Lord hath truly arisen, and hath appeared unto Simon;" but yet how weak is their faith; how they shrink from before Jesus as from before a spectre, and for joy are scarce able to believe (Luke 24:34; 37:41). So Mark can truthfully say: "Neither believed they" the two returning from the country (16:13). Not until the Lord had rebuked their unbelief, and by every proof convinced them of the reality of his person and body, is he able to lead them to rejoice; and eight days later he is compelled to treat a doubting Thomas in a similar manner (Jno. 20:20-26). How now could these apostles, who found it so hard to believe, have gone to an appointed place in Galilee, much less have been fully able to order others to repair thither, if Jesus had not first at Jerusalem overcome their unbelief and made them the glad witnesses of his resurrection?

There yet remains a word to be said about the report of that which the women experienced. In keeping with the principle laid down in 1 Cor. 14:34, "Let your women keep silent in the

churches," Paul ignores it altogether. Where we have to do with witnesses whose duty is to testify for all the people as to the truth, there women have no place. Their highly important sphere is found in the family circle of the disciples. Because they were the first whom love of their Lord drove out to his tomb, they were counted worthy of being the first of those who share in the joys of Easter-tide. Of the service of love which they desired to render to his dead body he had no need; instead of bringing that which was intended to honor the dead, they were to receive that which would give them certainty in regard to eternal life, and they were to be made worthy of being the first who, if they did not convince the apostles, at any rate aroused them from their sorrow, the messengers to the messengers of Christ.

From this very fact of woman's sphere being limited to this narrower circle, we can understand why the reports of what the women experienced are given so diversely in the several Gospels. Quite correctly one feels in this the fresh pulse of narration as this disciple from one woman, and that from another, collects into one group the fragments of the story. After the apostles themselves had come to believe, they did not feel called upon to verify the course of external events in every particular, as one would a protocol. So they bear the marks of first reports, and, forsooth, of such as come from the mouth of woman. The stamp of

truth, of personal experience, they have throughout; essentially the same events make up each of the four accounts. Yet, as the hand of woman paints, with delicate shading but not with equally firm contour, so the outer lines of the story are somewhat freely drawn. This of necessity is all the more the case since it is the language of women who had experienced extraordinary events, so that all their speech must have been excited and elevated in its character. This very confusing of events so disconcerting, this commingling of joy and terror, of hope and despondency, is so inimitably revealed in the nature of these narrations that we may say: "He must be a man devoid of sensibility whom the morning fragrance shed above them does not always move anew to peculiar and special sensations of bliss."

Having said so much, we shall now attempt to set forth with as much certainty as possible the order of the events. After the Sabbath, as the first day of the week began to dawn (as Matt. 28:1 reads when properly translated) the two Marys with Salome (Mark 16:1), Joanna (Luke 24:10) and others set out to go to the tomb. In the early dawn of morning they left the city (Luke 23:1). Mary Magdalene, excited above the rest, hastened on before and arrived at the tomb while it was yet dark (Jno. 20:1), saw that the stone had been rolled away, and then ran back full of terror. John, who is silent as to the other women, reports

further regarding her that upon her return she said :
“ We do not know where they have laid the Lord ”
(verse 5).

While she is away the other women reach the empty tomb, according to Mark (verse 2), just at sunrise, enter, see one angel (Matt. 28 : 5 ; Mark 16 : 5), or two (Luke 24 : 4, 23), one without (Matt.), one or both within, sitting (Mark), or standing (Luke), which varies with the reports of the different women, and varies also with the movements of a living being. The angels now announce to them that the living is no longer to be sought among the dead. Thereupon the women hasten back, full of joy, yet full also of consternation. According to Mark they do not venture at first to tell their experience to anyone ; probably they did not begin to speak of their experience until after Mary had brought back the news of the Lord's manifestation.

In the meantime Peter arrives at the tomb, according to Luke (24 : 12) alone, but according to John (20 : 3) in company with that other disciple. With this latter statement, however, Luke himself agrees when he records that the disciples who were on their way to Emmaus spoke of *certain ones* who had been out to the tomb.

According to John's Gospel Peter's going to the tomb took place immediately upon Mary Magdalene's announcing that the tomb was empty ; but Luke says nothing of it until after the return of

all the women, probably because he had made no mention of the fact that Mary Magdalene had hastened on ahead of the rest.

After the two disciples leave the tomb, Mary Magdalene sees there the vision of the angel, and immediately afterwards the first manifestation of the Lord (Jno. 20 : 14 ; Mark 16 : 9). Whether we shall regard Matthew's account of Jesus' appearing to the two Marys (28 : 9, 10) as only another more or less indefinite account of the same manifestation ; or whether we shall assume that after appearing to Mary Magdalene in particular he appeared to the women in general, is a question which it is difficult to decide with certainty. The latter view would be more easily assumed if, following the older and shorter rendering, we should read simply that "Jesus met them ;" that is, not upon their return, but later, after Mary Magdalene had witnessed his first manifestation.

But in any event, the disciples going to Emmaus seem to have left Jerusalem before any one of the women had seen the Risen One himself, at least before they themselves had learned of any manifestation (Luke 24 : 23). These were the two who, before they recognized the Lord, burned in their hearts as he opened to them the Scriptures (Luke 24 : 32). While they were hastening back to Jerusalem, Jesus appeared also to Simon Peter (Luke 24 : 34 ; 1 Cor. 15 : 5), then to the assembled apostles (Mark 16 : 14 ; Luke 24 : 36-43 ; Jno. 20 : 19-23 ;

1 Cor. 15 : 5), eight days later to Thomas also (Jno. 20 : 24 ff), then, for the third time, to the seven disciples at the Sea of Tiberias (Jno. 21), then to the eleven (and *probably* also to the more than five hundred brethren) upon the mountain in Galilee (Matt. 28 : 16 ff; Mark 16 : 15-18; 1 Cor. 15 : 6). Then, in addition to these, James obtained the privilege of seeing the Lord (1 Cor. 15 : 7), and finally all the disciples once more, whereupon followed the ascension of Christ into heaven (1 Cor. 15 : 7; Mark 16 : 19; Luke 24 : 44 ff; Acts 1). The manifestation which changed Saul into Paul occurred at a later time.

This is the message of the resurrection with respect to which Paul says : "Whether I or they (the other disciples) thus we preach, and thus have ye believed." The testimony of Paul includes that of the twelve, yea, of the five hundred brethren also. And what a weighty witness is Paul, a man of the highest rank, both in his knowledge and in his character; a man for whom the manifestation of Christ became the cause of a mighty repentance; a man who proved the thoroughness of his convictions by a life filled with conflicts and sacrifices; a man of ardent love and clearest vision, knowing well how to distinguish between the ecstasies in which he heard unspeakable words (2 Cor. 12 : 4)—of which he seldom made mention—and the fact of his having seen the Lord at Damascus, which everywhere was one of the chief

points in his speeches, because from that dated not only his conversion, but also his call to the apostleship to the Gentiles (Gal. 1:16, 17; 1 Cor. 9:1; 15:38). It is significant that already in his time there were some in the church at Corinth who denied the resurrection. These persons were the occasion of that mighty testification to the truth by the apostle which not only struck down the error there, but remains for all subsequent time as a fixed rock against which the frothing waves of this same delusion, always rising anew, lash and are confounded.

It is something truly very extraordinary which the accounts of Easter bring to view. One who had died stands before his disciples with a body which has the peculiarities of a real body, and at the same time some which are the very opposite; with a body composed of flesh and bone, and which can both taste and see, and which is recognized by the familiar tone of its voice; with a body which still bears the marks of the cruel wounds, which enjoys food, and yet is in no way hindered by closed doors from entering; with a body which can disappear in a twinkling, and which departs, finally, into heaven—this all seems very contradictory to us. But so it must be where eternal powers enter into the temporal sphere, where glorified life appears in the midst of this inglorious life. Some day we shall attain unto the likeness of his glorious body (Phil. 3:21; 1 Cor.

15:49). In the meantime, however, we carry about in our natural, or rather, "soulsh" bodies, the germ of the spiritual body, just as a grain of seed has wrapped up within it the power of an unforeseen development (1 Cor. 15:44, 37.)

The spiritual body—which does not signify a body composed wholly of spirit, no more than "soulsh" body signifies a body composed wholly of soul, but a body which is in this temporal and inglorious existence a tool, as it were, for the soul, so this spiritual body, when it has attained unto the full development of unlimited power and dominion in the kingdom of glory, shall be similarly a tool for the spirit—a coporeality, namely, whose free and unlimited movement shall be hindered by no indolence or weakness of material.

This we see before us in Christ, the first-born from the dead. We do not conceive—if we may say conceive—how we are to understand that which comes to us as having been personally experienced. But we conceive of it as the closing act of the work of redemption, without which it would be like an arch without its keystone. We conceive of it as the working of the might of the power of God which he has wrought in Christ, in that he has raised him from the dead (Eph. 1:19, 20). To this God, to the One working wondrously, the apostle refers his testimony in the full consciousness that if it be not true he will be found a false witness of God, bearing testimony

against God (1 Cor. 15:15). And how are we to contradict him, if so be we believe on the Living God, who is Lord of his creation, and not bound by laws of nature, as if some one—who could know who—had fastened them about him?

He is, to be sure, by no means a God of caprice, but a God of order; and that which we should learn is that we meet here with a divine arrangement, with a higher plan, which he, by means of Christ, planted within the world, with a fulfilling of his council with respect to the world, with a realization of that towards which Moses and the Prophets tended; for it is nothing other than the plan of redemption,—of the full and complete redemption, however, the redemption from sin and from the wages of sin, or death. This is the message proclaimed to us in Christ the Risen One. "Why seek ye the living among the dead?" says the angel (Luke 24:5). "I am the First and the Last, and the Living One; I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore." So read the words of the glorified Lord to his servant John (Rev. 1:17, 18).

Yea, the resurrection of the Crucified is the heart of the Gospel. If there were nothing of it, then, as the apostle testifies very distinctly, our preaching would be in vain, our faith vain, and we would still be in our sins (1 Cor. 15:14-17). And we can say with like import, then there would be *no redemption!* For what is redemp-

tion? According to the Scriptures nothing less than a ransom from the curse of sin; a ransom whereby all righteousness is fulfilled; a ransom by whose power we obtain, within lawful limits, the right to enter into eternal life. In behalf of our transgressions Christ was delivered up, and in behalf of our justification he was raised up from the dead (Rom. 4:25); accordingly that we, as belonging to him, might legitimately enter into life. Without the resurrection of Christ there would be none of all this, and we not only would still be in death, but we would also be without redemption from sin. Verily, "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable" (1 Cor. 15:19). A puissant affirmation! Who fully comprehends the misery of which it speaks? We believed in God, the Holy and Righteous, the Gracious, Long-suffering and Living One, and our trust in him was all in vain. He had not the power to put Death to death. We hoped for the final glorification of God's cause, for the ultimate victory over all evil, for the completion of redemption, when every sinful impulse, and all power and curse of sin would be wholly abolished, when we would be wholly free from the horror of a godless life—and of all this there was nothing! In spirit we had beheld the highest and grandest of objects, a kingdom of the great God which was wholly holy and altogether happy, and this most glorious vision was—an empty dream!

Living Christians, like an Apostle Paul, enlightened by a ray from the glory of God, who long for the praise of God, his complete praise—which can be obtained only through the operation of a complete redemption—have devoted to the attainment of this goal a life full of poverty and self-denial, of sacrifice, discipline and conflict,—and their devotion was for naught! Such as have hoped in vain for the highest and holiest are, for that very reason, of all men the most miserable.

But now Christ has risen from the dead and become the Firstling of them that slept (1 Cor. 15:20); the Firstling who shall not remain alone; the Firstling who even now allows his power of resurrection to work in those who believe in him (Eph. 2:6); for he gives them his Spirit as an earnest of redemption, as a pledge of that life which, beginning within, grows on unto completeness (Eph. 1:14; Rom. 8:11). That which Christians have in their Risen Redeemer is not future simply. *He* is, and they receive through communion in faith with him the beginning of the inner life, of reconciliation, of peace, of a walk with God, of sonship and sanctification—a beginning which carries with it security for the end. That is life which deserves the name; that is eternal life; that is what God wished to establish in the world of death; that is what will overcome death, and what God will complete in the establishment of his eternal kingdom. Already he, the

Risen One, has all power in heaven and upon earth; he is with his witnesses even unto the end of the world, those witnesses who preach the Gospel to every creature and strive to open a way for the establishment of his kingdom among all the peoples. Just now this kingdom is veiled in the form of servitude and humility, but just as he, the King, has entered into heavenly glory, so he will make his church a partaker in this glory. And in faith she says with the apostle (1 Cor. 15: 57), "Thanks be to God, who hath given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

C. J. RIGGENBACH, *Basel*.

XIX.

The Ascension of Jesus.

Thursday After Rogation Days.

"AND when he had said these things, as they were looking, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight;"—thus Luke closes his narrative of the events which had been fulfilled in accord with the councils of God. An accurate knowledge of these events he had gained from eye-witnesses and from the first ministers of the word. He set forth these events as a sure basis for the doctrine he wished to promulgate. The doctrine teaching just such an outcome for the life of Jesus as is set forth in the words of Luke above quoted, runs throughout the sacred Scriptures. For just as this outcome is closely interwoven with our inmost faith, and permeates to the deepest foundations of the Christian life, so it breaks forth repeatedly, and that, too, in unmistakable tones, in the preaching of those witnesses who had been chosen and equipped of God. The disciples had received the last words of their Master ("I came forth from the Father and have come into the world; again I leave the world and go to the Father") with great confidence, as is evidenced by their words: "Lo now thou speakest plainly."

We are prepared to expect that this same degree of confidence would rest in an exalted and glorified manner upon the joyous open lips of the apostles, and so are not surprised when we hear Peter with new tongues pouring forth words of praise in his first testimony to the people of Israel when he says, "The Lord said unto my Lord, 'Sit thou on my right.'" We are prepared to expect that the immediate nature of Paul's meeting with him who had ascended into heaven would have its fitting expression in his preaching, and are not surprised at the powerful cadenza of his song in that lofty refrain: "Confessedly, great is the mystery of godliness: God revealed in the flesh—received up into glory!" And so it was necessary in order to include the sum total of apostolic teaching in the confession of universal Christianity upon earth, that this be added as an essential proposition for faith: "He has ascended into heaven, and he sits at the right hand of God, the Omnipotent Father, whence he shall come to judge the living and the dead." The real narration, however, the historic course of this divine event, is found only in our third Gospel; and consequently in this exposition which we are now undertaking, we see ourselves limited to one account. How does the ascension of the Lord appear when viewed in this light? First as a farewell, then as an ascension, and lastly as a return home.

"God hath ascended with a shout, the Lord with

the sound of a trumpet ; sing praises to God ; sing praises to our King ; for he is King over all the earth, and rules over the heathen, sitting upon the throne of his glory." Thus runs a psalm for the sons of Korah. If we concede that the church is right in regarding this psalm as a prelude to the ascension of Jesus Christ into heaven, then its tones afford a means of estimating what sort of a farewell he took from the top of the Mount of Olives. When rejoicing and songs of praise accompany him, and when, too, we actually read in regard to his chosen witnesses that "they worshipped him and were continually in the temple, blessing God," then all the sorrowful reflections which might be called up by the nature of the account flee away of their own accord ; and no sad picture is presented to our eyes, either on the part of the one departing, or on that of those remaining behind who stand gazing steadfastly into the heavens. The Lord is not departing from life in this hour. He had drained the cup when, torn from the land of the living, he, through the grace of God, tasted of death once for all. But after he has now taken up his life again and has shown himself alive through manifold proofs, he dies no more ; death no longer has dominion over him, and no one may tell the number of his days. Neither does he really leave the disciples. They had suffered during this hour of separation, as a woman in travail. But he had said, "I shall see

you again." And they saw again, and heard again and handled again with their hands the Word of Life. And this occurred as it had been promised beforehand: "Your hearts shall rejoice and no one shall be able to take away your joy from you;—and lo, I am with you, even unto the end of the world." They were now in condition to realize the propriety of the rebuke: "You should have rejoiced because I said unto you, I go to the Father!" What then remains with us as the true contents of his present departure? It is this: his leave-taking is a FAREWELL to earth! He who has received all authority, even upon earth, and has become a King over its kings; he who henceforth is to rule over this stage of action by his Spirit, yea will, through its power, dwell in the church on earth, this one must cross over bodily into another sphere, in order to carry on this ruling from a more exalted abode. "Dost thou sojourn alone in Jerusalem?" thus the two disciples on their way to Emmaus in surprise questioned the Arisen One, and thereby (unwittingly) hit upon an expression which applies to him exactly. The children of the resurrection, it is written, inherit the world beyond; least of all then can the Firstling from the dead, the great Shepherd of the sheep, be longer a sojourner upon this earth; its borders no longer afford the soil upon which his blessed feet may tread. Once he had said, "The Son of man hath not where to lay his head;" these words are now true in an-

other sense. No one dares ask him, "Master, where abidest thou?" No one thinks of preparing a place for him upon earth. Simon Peter on the Mount of Transfiguration says, to be sure, "Master, it is good for us to be here; let us make three tabernacles, one for thee, one for Moses and one for Elias;" but the judgment which is passed in regard to him is: "He knew not what he said." *"The heaven is my throne and the earth the footstool of my feet; where is the house that ye will build unto me? and where is the place of my rest?"* To such language, and to such a query the glorified Son of man also has full right. Twice he enters the chamber where the Eleven are assembled alone. He grants the request of the two: "Abide with us; for it is towards evening, and the day is far spent;" but he comes as a guest on a visit, just as when Abraham received him in the plains of Mamre. There he goes through closed doors, and here he vanishes from before their eyes. He partakes of the food which, upon his request, they offer him; yet no one ventures to say as of yore: "Master, eat;" for they feel that he now may say with still deeper meaning: "I have meat to eat which ye know not of." They cannot conceal it from themselves: this is the beginning of the end; the grain of wheat has fallen into the ground and died; the fruit of the open tomb strives to attain unto its rightful place, and the hour of its transition is now at hand!

The fourth day after Easter has dawned. The Arisen One has assembled his chosen witnesses in Jerusalem. He leads them out and enters upon the well-known road to Bethany. Upon the top of the Mount of Olives he halts. From this point he once—it was not so very long ago—had lifted up his eyes over the city of the great King and amid tears of lamentation said: “*I would have gathered you together under my wing, and ye would not!*” At the same time he had pronounced its judgment in the prophecy: “Henceforth ye shall not see me until ye say, ‘*Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.*’” Yet, in one sense, even they who are his shall henceforth see him no more; for here is the last time in which he stands before them, in their midst, within the circle of the horizon of earthly vision. But he will not vanish from before them as Moses vanished from before the children of Israel, so that “no one knows the place of his sepulture, even unto this day;” for they are to be witnesses of his departure; he will pass over in sight of their longing eyes. “And as they were looking he was taken up!”—his departure is an ASCENSION! The prophet of the Old Testament whose zeal and work, whose spirit and power, found their counterpart in John the Baptist was, as regards the manner of his departure from the earth, a type of Jesus Christ. “There appeared a fiery chariot and horses of fire, and Elijah went up by a whirlwind

into heaven." We take it that the cloud which the disciples see instead of the fiery chariot, corresponds to the still small voice which followed after the storm and the fire there before the cave in Horeb; and that no one suspects that this cloud is bearing up and away the Prince of Life! As when he said they would see the Son of man coming upon the *clouds* of heaven with great power and glory, so here the cloud is only the halo of his glory from which emanates, without the medium of word or voice, the testimony of the Father concerning him: "This is my beloved Son, hear ye him." No; he hath gone up on high; by his own power he hath swung himself aloft! It happens, indeed, that there are other incidents in the narrative of the life of our Lord which call forth more or less serious astonishment, when contemplated by devotion, or when they pass beneath the eye of eager, critical thought; but it is at the foot of the Mount of Olives that men have found in the largest measure such a stone of stumbling—just as if here no daylight shines, but rather as if thick darkness envelopes us on every side. Even some who abide with complete content in Gethsemane, and look with an eye of faith upon the stone which has been rolled away from the tomb of Jesus, are by no means inclined to accept the miracle of the ascension. It is as if the Savior foresaw this offence when he said to his murmuring disciples in the school at Capernaum:

“Doth this cause you to stumble? What then if ye should see the Son of man ascending where he was before?” It appears later, moreover, as if the apostles, through indulgence of a certain weakness, would rather call themselves witnesses of his resurrection than of his ascension! In fact, this occurrence is intended for the eyes of only such as are his, not for those who know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God. Just as in times before this he revealed his power over nature only in the presence of trusted eyes, just as it was only before his disciples that he rebuked the raging elements, and so brought about a great calm, and as it was only in their presence that he walked upon the waves of the sea, as though upon the solid ground, so only they might see him ascend into heaven to whom had been given the general assurance, “Unto you will I reveal myself, and not unto the world;” they, forsooth, who consoled themselves with the hope of some day being caught up into the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so to be with him forever. And they beheld the miracle without stumbling, yea, even without amazement; and filled with pure reverence and a feeling of joy they receive words of blessing from him who now ascendeth. The place where we stand is holy ground: wherefore let us take off our shoes from off our feet, and put away from us the reflections which the impression of his pilgrimage on earth so readily call up within us. The more

thoroughly we set them aside the more completely will the stumbling block found in the ascension of Jesus not only disappear, but even become the manifest product of foolishness and narrow-mindedness. "O ye foolish and slow of heart," thus the Arisen One addresses those disciples who even on the day of his glorification are filled with sorrow. In a like manner the apostle dares to rebuke those who are startled at the result of Easter's miracle: "Thou foolish one, thou sowest not the body which shall be, but God giveth it a body even as it pleased him, and to each seed a body of its own." And this spiritual body which has arisen in strength and glory, the willing and well-adapted organ of the spirit, would we measure it with the same measure, and think of it as subject to the same laws which underlie the one sown in weakness? Would we, indeed, think for a moment of proceeding thus with respect to the Firstling from the dead? The Psalmist says: "*I ascend up into heaven, I make my bed in hell, I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,*" and thereby he bears testimony to his ability, in the spirit, to transfer himself to the deepest, highest and most remote regions, even while his body remains fixed to its place. The apostle tells how he was caught up even into the third heaven; he praises the divine favor which truly had borne him aloft into paradise. He expresses himself as uncertain whether

at this unforgotten and never to be forgotten hour—it has been fourteen years since the event—he was in the body or out of the body, “but,” he says, “God knoweth.” If now, however, we also presuppose that he continued still to abide in the house of his earthly tabernacle, still was sojourning away from home, what a testimony—shall I say to the sanctified Spirit, or shall I say of the power of heavenly grace?—lies before us in the fact that the apostle was not overcome by this uncertainty! And what a conclusion voluntarily presents itself in this event regarding him of whom it had been said expressly: “The last Adam has become a life giving spirit!” Yea, indeed, the Lord hath truly and in bodily form ascended before the eyes of his disciples into the world above, just as he had truly and in bodily form come forth from his tomb as a bridegroom from his chamber, and just as he truly and in bodily form shall in like manner come again in that day to the new earth wherein righteousness shall have found its abode.

It was only the presentiment of sanctified fancy which sought expression in the notes of David’s harp, for the heavens had not yet opened; and it was only faith which, by its power of exaltation, carried the apostle up to the degree of rapture he mentions; for he himself bears witness to the fact that no eye hath seen what God hath prepared for those who love him. The Savior, however, hath

ascended, "not with uncertainty," "not as if into the air," but thence whence he came. "No one hath ascended into heaven but he that descended out of heaven, the Son of man which is in heaven." Whence his ascension is an ascension into heaven—a RETURN HOME! He had prayed, "I have finished the work which thou hast given me to do; and now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was!" Now he enters into his glory, he takes his seat upon the throne of God, at the right of the majesty in the heavens, and the "*sheb limini*" is fulfilled which David's prophetic mouth had foretold of his Son and Lord. It does not belong to our present task to weigh the question which is touched upon in the beautiful strophe of the song, "Now is this thy work in the sanctuary above." That he has entered into the heavens, now to appear in our behalf before the face of the Father; that he has become a guardian in the tabernacle set up by God, and not by any man; that he rests from his labors and yet still works in order that he may fulfill all things, is justified in the spirit, preached among the heathen, believed on earth, all of this transcends his ascension to heaven as such; and the prayer of the Church, "Ruler, rule; conqueror, conquer; king, sway thy regal scepter," is adapted to the exalted One in general. But even if on this account we should seek to go beyond the bare lim-

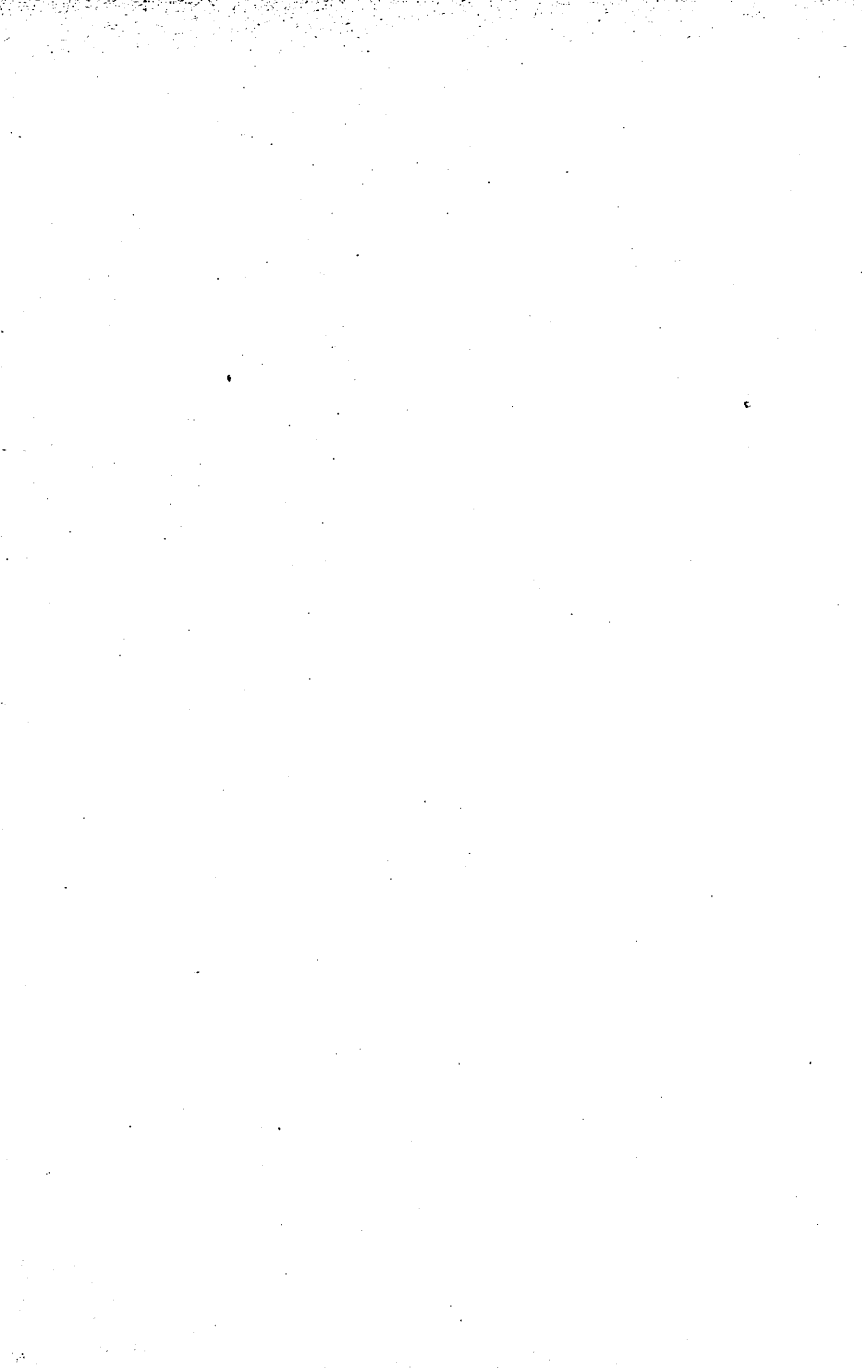
its of the return home, the cloud which surrounded the Prince of Life while he was yet before the disciples' eyes, would seem to deny to us, as well as to them, any nearer insight. And if we accord an abiding worth to the rebuke couched in the angel's words, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye here looking into heaven?" then it too would forbid such vain folly as when the fixed and steadfast gaze seeks to peer into and search out the impenetrable. Here, in fact, upon the top of Olivet we see, in the highest measure, "only through a mirror, in an enigma." Meanwhile, the limits can be drawn within which contemplation must proceed if it would avoid a twofold by-path. It has happened, and still happens, inasmuch as "the heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork," that the pious soul, when its eyes contemplate the wonders of the firmament, is reminded of those great words of farewell, "In my Father's house are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you," and that it thinks of its glorified Lord as enthroned in the heavens which arch themselves above our heads. However, not only do the Scriptures deprive this error of all its ground and contents, but it becomes manifest as an error upon a moment's reflection. "The heaven and all the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee," said Solomon in his prayer at the dedication of the temple which he had built; and the apostle teaches expressly that he who went up on

high “hath ascended *far above all the heavens*, that he might fulfill all things.” If we believe the testimony of another apostle, that not only the elements and the earth, and the works which are therein, but even the heavens, shall pass away; if, in accord with his testimony, we look not only for a new earth, but also for a new heaven, oh, how could we then seek for the throne of the Eternal King in a place consecrated to certain destruction! May it not be, however, that our faith, in seeking to avoid this cliff, shall suffer a much more grievous injury upon another! We attach value to the exact wording in the confession of the Church—“He sits upon the right of the Omnipotent Father.” Was it accidental, or should it not much rather be looked upon as the work of Truth’s guardian and pilot that the right of the Omnipotent Father, and not the right of the Omnipresent God, is specified as the fixed dwelling-place of the glorified Son of man?—It is with difficulty that we keep to the fact of the ascension. If the Lord was to be seen by his disciples ascending up on high, he must also have come into a world above, into the world concerning which he had said to the Jews, “I go away; ye shall seek me and shall die in your sins; whither I go ye cannot come; ye are from beneath, I am from above; ye are of this world, I am not of this world.” And this world above, this home towards which Jesus Christ goes, must be more than a

mere empty, limitless existence. How else may we interpret the words of Scripture, or even satisfy the imperative need of our own heart? Or are the pictures which the apostles paint when they tell of the city of the Living God, and what they have seen therein, mere idle fancies, pure imagery? Upon this occasion John stood on the top of Olivet and beheld the Lord ascending up on high, and the city of Jerusalem lay at his feet. At another time he was in the spirit on the Lord's day; an angel led him to the top of a high mountain, and he saw up over him another Jerusalem coming down out of heaven. He told the gates of this holy city, he measured her walls, and he saw that the Lamb was the temple and the light thereof. Surely this all does not sound like a parable, or idle fancy! Or had an illusive dream cast its spell around him, and a deceitful vision shown him the open heaven and the Son of man sitting at the right of the Father? Yea, verily, they were full of the Spirit, but not of the intoxicating wine of fanaticism! And these green and inviting meadows which are thereby opened up to our view, do we wish to exchange them for the barren regions of an undefined, shadowy, eternal existence? No; there is a world above in the most real sense of the word, and into this, his home, the Ascending One hath entered. And he says: "All authority has been given me, both in heaven and upon the earth." He has the key to

open and to shut. "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." "Whither I go thou canst not follow me now, but thou shalt follow afterwards." "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I come again and will receive you unto myself; that where I am *there* ye may be also." Just that is the power which closes the good message of the ascension, and confirms it. The fact, accordingly, that the Lord hath left the earth, ascended into heaven, and entered into his kingdom is henceforth a surety of his complete union with those who are his. To this point also the words of the angel to those disciples who had been left behind, viz.: "This Jesus who is being taken away from you into the heavens shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him ascending into heaven." And the church on earth from that time on has made reply: "Come, Lord Jesus!" And if we feel encumbered in this tabernacle of clay, and with groanings long, not to be unclothed, but to be clothed upon, in order that mortality may be swallowed up in life, then a ray of hope from Olivet consoles our hearts;—"upon the ascension of Christ alone I base my hope of following him; by it alone I overcome all doubt, anxiety and pain; for since the Head is in heaven, its members, those who are Jesus Christ's, shall in due season be brought to him."

F. L. STEINMEYER, *Berlin.*



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